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GROOMING THE GRIZZLY

A History of Woonham and Area





Eli Barrett cabin - first Wanham School - 1917 -
also used as the first nurses home in 1924 (from
picture taken in 1970)



West Vale School - the first school in West Vale -
built in 1930 (from picture taken in 1930)

GROOMING THE GRIZZLY

A History of Wanham and Area



Dedication

Prairie Pioneer

Where sleeps the pioneer
Who on a Prairie morn
Laid hold the handles of the plow
Before the day was born;

Who with the patient oxen
Yoked to the faithful share,
Threw, wave on wave, the virgin soil
Great future to prepare?

Mark well the place of his repose!
Tell others of his name!
No nobler race of pioneer
Can our affection claim.

by Sam Parlee



In the 11 years that I have been directing Alberta Culture's Film and Literary Arts Branch, I have had occasion to read a lot of local histories (including a couple from the area where I myself was raised). I can only say of them that they become more and more irresistible as the years go by.

Sometimes I will get up in the middle of the night and, unable to go back to sleep, take down one of these histories and read again about somebody I knew. Always, I get still another insight into the lives of people I wish I could see or talk to; just once again - the people whose faith and labor carved the good land that is our Alberta today.

This is how it will be with this history of Wanham and district.

Long years from now, the grandchildren of those whose stories are told in these pages will turn to this regional history, hungry for still more insight into the lives of pioneer relatives and neighbors. What were their dreams? What were their disappointments? "How," they will ask themselves, "would I have made out if I had come here then?"

In these pages, perhaps in utterly simple language but with a realism no novelist can equal, the answers are hidden. Those who read will be spellbound, for this writing is from the heart. This book is for all those not too proud to acknowledge their debt to those who went before.

It is a particular pleasure for me to write these few words of appreciation because it was in this area that I ventured to hold the first creative writing workshop ever

held in a rural area anywhere in Canada, as far as I am aware. Many of the writers who contributed to the compilation of this work were among those attending this workshop. I have, and will always have, a warm feeling of friendship for them. They are pioneers, too, worthy of the name.

At the same time, I think it would be remiss of me not to confess to something else: a feeling, almost of awe, at the awesome accomplishments of the Wanham area residents. Their strong spirit in launching C.O.C.O. in 1970 has surely resulted in a harvest beyond belief. The Wanham Plowing Match is actually a famous Canadian event today; and the fact that these people have completed an \$800,000 community complex, in a trading area of only about a thousand residents, personifies all that has ever been said about the ambition, resourcefulness and optimism of the Canadian West - the spirit that will never be conquered.

There is a lot of labor ... sometimes a lot of soul-searching and doubt ... to beginning and completing a history like this. But I am sure no other book (with the possible exception of the Bible) will be read more often by those for whom it is intended.

I salute all who worked on it - a lasting memorial to those who lived it.

- John Patrick Gillese
Director, Alberta Culture
Film and Literary Arts Branch

June 3, 1982

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the assistance of New Horizons, Alberta Culture, Birch Hills Senior Centre, C.O.C.O., Village of Wanham, Isabel Campbell, Grande Prairie Public Library, Provincial Archives and the Herald Tribune.

We thank all who made the road a bit easier by giving of your time and talents. To Norma Proudfoot, Lily Sather and Kelly Tansem for your research.

To Jim and Mona Howard, John Johnson, Lawrence Laughy, Orist Melnyk, Art and Dora Tansem, and Mollie Tansem for help in identifying pictures.

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To typists Donna Reiswig, Ruby Reum, Naida Sather, Eunice Parlee, Sharon Zamorsky, June Yuill

and Judy Reiswig.

To Sam Parlee for the name.

To Dora Tansem as treasurer.

To helpers who came so willingly when called - Dot Brissard, Annie Shaw, Linda Murray, Olga Podruzny, Corrine Wilson, Lorraine Wilson and Ella Peddy.

To all on behalf of the book committee our thanks.

The art work of Gwen Drysdale speaks for itself. Under her pen the buildings and our Grizzly have come alive.

To Dick Huber of Inter Collegiate Press. A man of patience. You have waited a long time.

Last but not least the editorial committee would like to pay tribute to editor Wally Tansem for all his work and the pleasant atmosphere he managed to maintain in spite of difficult decisions and trying situations.

Compiled by
Birch Hills Historical Society
Edited by
Wallace Tansem

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FOREWORD

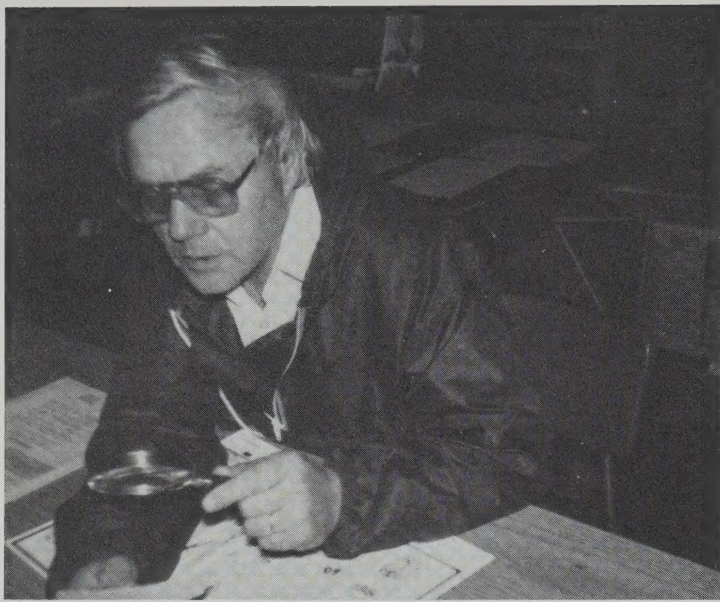
It seems a lifetime ago that the Birch Hills Historical Society was formed. It consisted of William Sallis, Edwin and Grace Sather, Art and Dora Tansem, Anne and George Wendland, Mary Sather, Dorothea Connell, Lily Sather, Dorcas Watt and Carl Nagel with Adelaide Zmean as chairperson. Through the efforts of these people a grant was obtained from New Horizons to begin the task of publishing a book of Wanham and area. An editorial committee was set up and it has been these people who shouldered the burden of getting the book into print. The editorial committee included Wally Tansem, Vi Wilde, Sharon Zamorsky, Adelaide Zmean, Sam Parlee, Eileen Parlee and Elaine Dick. The book should have been written many years ago when information from the earlier pioneers was readily available. This is acknowledged. We are grateful however to all the pioneers who were left and to the children of the pioneers for the stories they sent in.

The book has become a reality through the efforts of many people but certainly the workhorses deserve the

major credit. To Elaine Dick, to Vi Wilde, Eileen and Sam Parlee, who directed the major push, the credit is yours. I thank you on behalf of all who will read these pages for your hours upon days, upon weeks, upon months of researching, of cutting and pasting, of worry and sleepless nights. The reward comes in knowing that we have persevered and the book is in print.

Finally today June 9, 1982, Grooming the Grizzly is on its way to the publisher. This all consuming millstone is finally gone. Thank heaven. We never want to see this thing again. But wait. What will it look like in print? Even now there is this anticipation creeping in. An excitement to see this child come alive in pictures and stories. A wondering if perhaps we can find one little mistake, one small spelling error. But never mind, we have done our best. It is yours to enjoy.

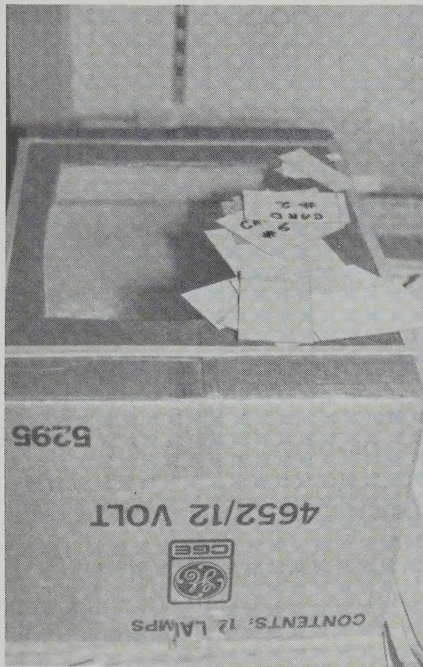
Wallace Tansem
Editor



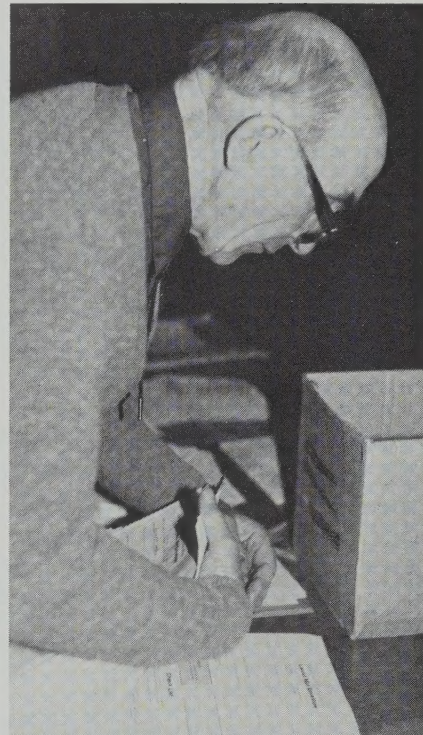
I think that's ah-er-ah-er-Editor Wallace Tansem.



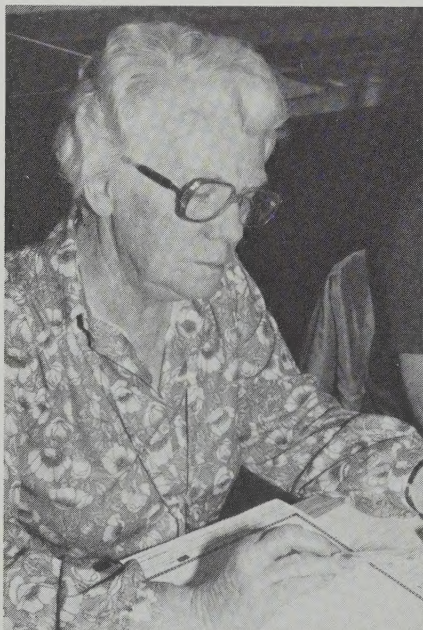
There's no way that picture will fit in that space - Adelaide Zmean and Vi Wilde.



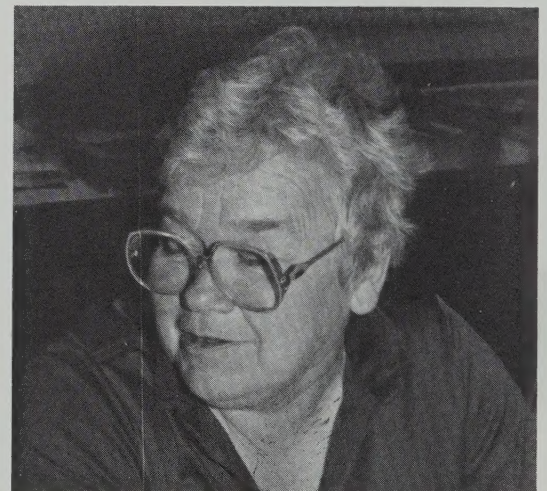
Sam's Picture Box.



Just checking to make sure they're all here - Sam Parlee.



Has anybody seen pages 198-199???? Eileen Parlee.



I could have told you you had the wrong caption - Dot Brissard.

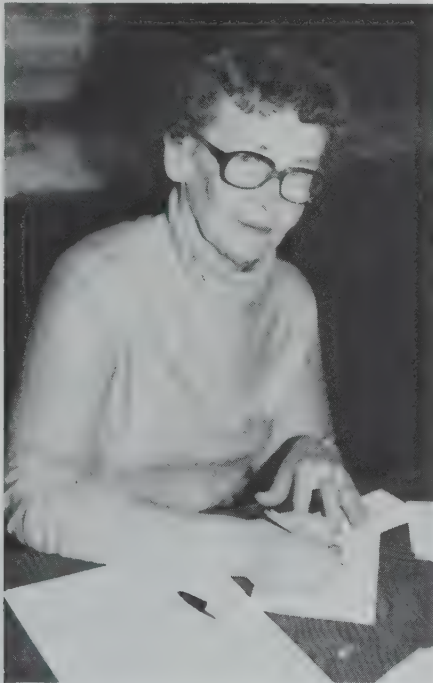


There's room for glamour even at a typist's job - Sharon Zamorsky.

I can't believe she looked like that when she was young - Eileen Parlee.



Can anybody tell me how I got into this??? - Elaine Dick.



Let me think - I should know who that is - Art and Dora Tansem.



Time for laughter - Olga Podruzny.

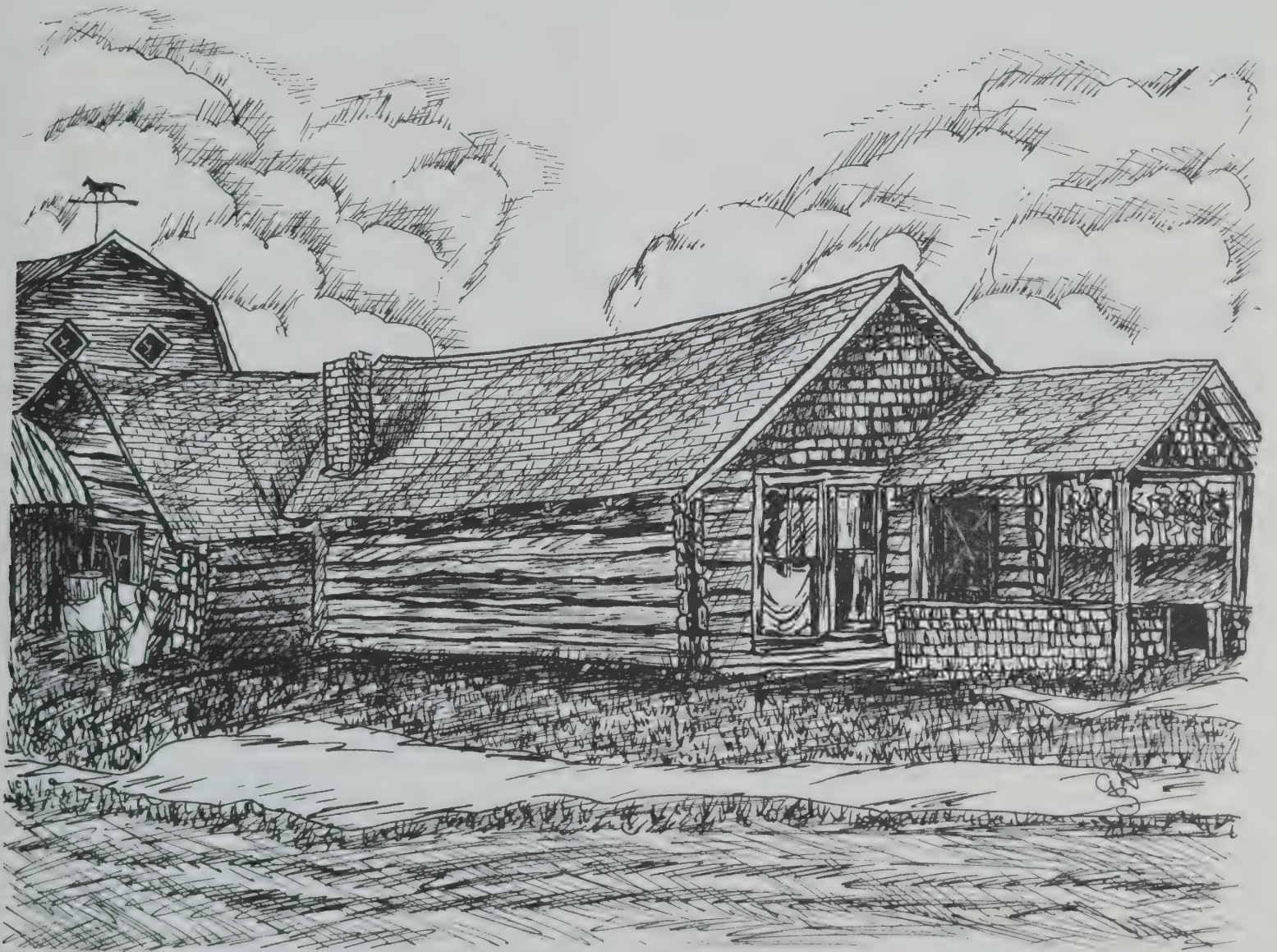


Time for serious work - Adelaide Zmean, Olga Podruzny and Eileen Parlee.

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In The Beginning



Original Leriger Home - the first dwelling built in
what is now Wanham.

IN THE BEGINNING ...

by Wallace Tansem

The hills scarcely listened that day in June of 1914 to the sounds that drifted up from the valley below and why should they? These hills just south of Wanham were formed nearly 70 million years ago and had heard many things in their lifetime. They had felt the tread of the dinosaurs and the cold waters of the Arctic Ocean as it rolled over them from the north and they watched the ocean retreat. Later the grinding glaciers cut them down until no vegetation or life remained.

Slowly they recovered and life returned. Stone age men hunted their brow and sides and left scattered, some 12,000 years ago, the spear points and scrapers they used. And then 7,500 years ago these men, probably because of a hot dry spell, disappeared. The hills waited. Three thousand years passed and men returned. The smoke from their campfires fingered its way down into the lowlands. The sounds of an occasional hunting party moving through their forested hillsides was all that disturbed them. Much later men came gathering the bark for their canoes from the birch trees that crowded the slopes. And the hills received their name "The Birch".

So the rattling sound of the team and wagon lurching it's way across the valley floor meant little and yet this sound heralded the first of the settlers to arrive in our area. The Birch Hills welcomed them with her trees for a cabin and a fire, her flowing springs for water, her moss for chinking the cabin walls and her animals for food.

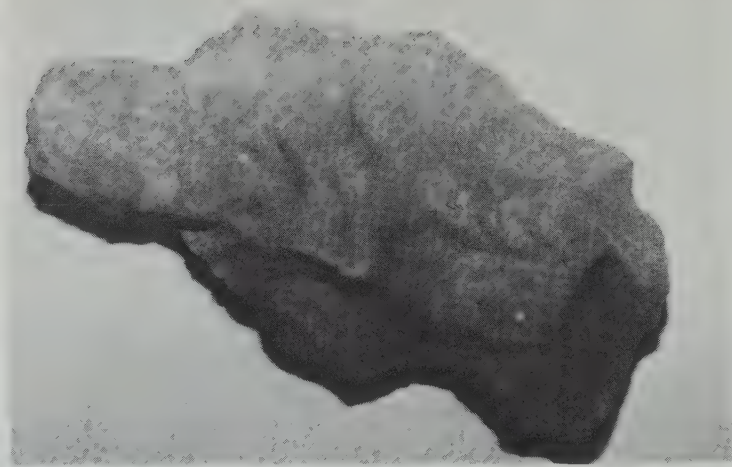


Parlee Artifact Collection.

HISTORY OF THE AREA

by Joan Scott

The Peace River Country has been known to white man for only about one hundred sixty years. Prior to the coming of Alexander MacKenzie in 1792, the area was inhabited by the Beaver and Cree Indians. MacKenzie was followed by other explorers: Fraser, Thompson, and Findlay. The Scotsmen of the North-West Company came to gain control of this rich fur area, followed by the Hudson Bay Company. The French Canadian Voyageurs and the Iroquois accompanied the traders. Beginning in the 1870's the gold miners passed through, some staying to look for gold in the Peace River area. The most



Parlee Artifact.

famous of these being the legendary Twelve Foot Davis.

Dunvegan, which is forty miles west and north of Wanham, was first visited by Alexander MacKenzie in 1793. In 1805-6 the North-West Company under A.A. McLeod built Fort Dunvegan. J.D. McGregor states in his book, *The Land Of Twelve Foot Davis*, "For over one hundred years it was the focal point of the Peace River Country".¹

Nearly one hundred years after Fort Dunvegan, a mission was established at Spirit River by Father LaTreste in 1892. A larger mission was built here in 1903 when Dunvegan Mission was closed.

Spirit River then became the centre of trade and settlement for the area south of the Peace River. It contained the post office and store. People settling in the Wanham area were required to travel twenty-five or thirty miles to Spirit River to get supplies and mail. Mr. Hans Mortensen, one of Wanham's early settlers, tells of making this trip on foot, travelling one way in a day.

1. McGregor, p. 152.

The first mention of the area around Wanham is made in McLeod's Journal, when in 1806 a group was sent to the Birch Hills south of Wanham to find birch bark for roofing and canoes.²

Very few people had settled in the Wanham area before the building of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railroad in 1916. The first white man known to have come to the area to settle was Richard Johnson who came in the spring of 1914, leaving to return in 1915. Five men came in December of 1914, to file on homesteads in the area: Hans Mortenson, Cornelius Olson, Emil and Martin Bode and P. Melander. They built two log cabins and remained the winter.

After the coming of the railroad more people came to take out homesteads in the area. Some of these settlers were families with children. Peter Tansem opened a store and post office in 1918. Many of the settlers worked in the sawmill, cut ties for the railroad or trapped to help support themselves until enough land could be cleared for farming.

2. MacGregor, p. 159.

OUR LITTLE KINGDOM

by Wallace Tansem

“We had the whole country to ourselves, we had a little kingdom and we were the kings.” These were the words of Wanham’s oldest settler, Hans Mortenson.

Hans and Cornelius Olson came into the Wanham valley together. Richard Johnson walked into the country the year before on a scouting trip and returned to Edmonton. After coming to Edmonton by train, Hans and Cornelius took a construction train to Sawridge, from Sawridge over Lesser Slave Lake by boat to Grouard. Here Hans bought a team and a wagon for the journey into the Peace. A good team and wagon were priced at between \$500 and \$600. From Grouard the fun began. It was late spring, complete with mud holes and sloughs. “It was hard to describe, sometimes we made less than ten miles in a whole day of travel from sunup to sun-down”, Hans recalls.

In Edmonton they had been shown brochures of Dunvegan and the Peace River country. These showed trolley cars running along the streets of Dunvegan, a nice big bridge spanning the Peace. Anything you wished for was there.

Battling through the sea of mud each day, the thought of the city they would soon get to spurred them on and one day the valley and Peace River town lay below them.

There was little in Peace River town in 1914. Hans recalls only a sort of Immigration Hall, a store and a couple of restaurants. The trail from Peace River town led across the river by ferry to Shaftsbury. The hills on this side of the river were so steep that a team of horses were unable to pull even an empty wagon up the slope. Travellers had to wait until another teamster arrived and with two teams the top could be reached. Two trips or more were needed to get all the supplies to level ground again. In Peace River, Hans and Cornelius met a man by the name of Dickson who had bought lots in Dunvegan from a real-estate company in Edmonton. When the man finally arrived in Dunvegan he could not find his land. When he at last found them they were smack in the middle of a cut-bank.

No trolley cars, no bridge, no city greeted Hans and Cornelius at Dunvegan, only a small settlement and a ferry to get across the river. From there the old trail wound through the sloughs, skirted the hills and finally arrived in Spirit River. The townsite was then located a short distance west from where Rycroft now stands. An overnight stop for the team in the livery barn cost \$1, oats was 50¢ extra, oat bundles 25¢. From Spirit the two came east looking over the land. Arriving just south of Wanham, they found the land that looked the best. Here they unloaded a couple of trunks and other goods, covered them with canvas and decided to go to Grande Prairie to file on this land.

The trip to Grande Prairie took three days with a two day stopover in Sexsmith. An axe and a saw were necessary tools on the trail. In many places through the Saddle Hills the road was so narrow that teams were unable to pass and a turnout would have to be cut. In Sexsmith, Hans and Cornelius met Mr. Foster who sold them oats and urged them to take land close to him. They

declined, completed their journey to Grande Prairie, filed on their quarters of land and returned to begin building their cabins. It was on their return that they saw the tracks covering the ground. They were cattle tracks and there were a lot of them. Had they seen them before filing on their land they would have hesitated and probably gone elsewhere. But now the land was theirs to prove up. So Hans and Cornelius picked out building sites, took off their coats and went to work in their little kingdom.

Hans and Cornelius worked together that first summer and each built a cabin. The cabins were of poplar logs with poles and sod for the roof. The day of a rain there was little or no water dripping from the ceiling. However, a day after the water fell outside it fell inside. Rather a strange feeling to see the sun shining brightly and the water running down the back of one’s neck. This, though, was only one of the many obstacles that faced these early settlers. Many a 50 pound pack Hans recalls carrying from Spirit River back here. A sack of flour, a few beans, a jug of coal-oil at \$3.00 a gallon, the mail, all lugged on the pack-board. Walking was much faster than by team and wagon. A walking trip with an early start in the morning would take a day, providing you were a good traveller.

In the fall of 1914, the Bode brothers came into the valley. Martin and Emil Bode arrived fairly late in the fall. There was not time for them to erect cabins so in common pioneer spirit, Hans and Cornelius moved into one cabin and let their new neighbors spend the winter in the other. Moose were more than plentiful and the meat was a welcome addition to the diet of bannock and beans. The tallow was used for candles and the light from a candle along with leaving the stove door open gave off enough light to read by for a short time. Shortly the cabin would fill with smoke, the eyes would get watery and then it would be time for bed. There was much to keep busy at during the first winter. The neighbors helped each other out and as Hans said, “Never a cent in return was given and none expected. When you wanted help, it was there. It was a nice feeling”.

Trapping took up much of the time, with foxes, martens, weasels, coyotes and the odd lynx. The first winter Hans made \$130 at trapping. He recalls that the winter was quite warm although a lot of snow fell. Emil Bode and Hans were having difficulty in the deep snow so travelled into the Birch Hills looking for trees suitable for making a couple of pairs of skis. They needed them fairly long as both were big men. It was difficult to find a tree without a knot in that length. After cutting down several birch they managed to get enough. Then the task of splitting the trees. This was done with the help of wedges. After quite some time, the skis were finished. A form was made for bending the points up and after a soaking in hot water, placing them in the forms was their final job.

The first summer Hans broke five acres and harvested his first crop (the first one grown here) in 1916. This was a crop of oats and was a bumper. As there was no threshing machine in the country, the first crop was sold to travellers in need of feed for 10¢ a bundle. In 1918, Hans traded his team of horses for a team of oxen. These powerful animals were used for breaking new land. One drawback of using oxen was that they could not stand the

WANHAM - THE STRUGGLE

heat of day and so the land breaking had to be done at night. A smudge would be built at each end of the field as the mosquitoes were terrible. The oxen would be headed down the field to the smudge and the closer they got to it the faster they would move. Hans would let them stand in the smoke for a few minutes and then with a great deal of swearing, a few kicks and some more talk, the animals would be on their way down the field to the other smoke and a complete repeat of the whole operation. Using a 14 inch plow, it was considered a fine night's work to be able to break $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre. No estimate Hans could give of the number of miles covered through the years walking behind the plow but they were many.

Emil Melander arrived in 1914 with H. Thorin, Bill Trumpower and a few others arriving in 1915. Ed. Prevost, Jack Grey, Oscar Oaklief came in 1916. There was excitement in the community when at Christmastime of 1916 the steel gang and the shining ribbons of iron appeared east of the site for the village. By this time many other settlers had come and the influx was just about to begin. Fred Murphy arrived and with him the districts first binder. A small hand-fed thresher also arrived in the community. With this machine the first threshing could be done. It needed a man to cut the sheave bands, a man to keep the straw away from the blower. The grain was threshed into sacks. A full day of threshing with outfit would see about 500 bushels of oats gleaned. Less of other grains. In the later years, this amount only represented a couple hours of work.

Eli Barrett was an early settler and he, along with Bill Trumpower, became the "moonshine kings". There was always a ready and waiting market for moonshine. These two men, along with a few others, supplied the market. Many are the stories told associated with homebrew. One time, as Hans recalls it, Eli had made what he considered a dandy batch. He made the mistake, however, of telling one of the settlers where he had cached it. It was in a hayloft nicely stored in small pint-sized corked bottles. It was only a matter of sneaking into the loft and transferring the shine to a large bottle and replacing the small ones. Poor Eli was furious and stormed around the community trying to find out where his brew had disappeared. Some of the culprits finally convinced Eli that he had made the moonshine too powerful and it had simply blown the corks. He thought about it for awhile and finally decided to cut down on something or other he had done to the explosive batch.

Bill Trumpower through the years, had many a brush with the law as they tried to catch him at his trade. His favorite caching place was in the bottom of fence pole holes. He would simply cut off the fence posts, drop a bottle with a string attached to its neck down the hole and replace the post. Many a Mountie crawled through a fence on Bill's land not knowing that the evidence he sought was only a few inches away from him.

Hans Mortenson passed away in Wanham after living here 56 years. Hans had stuck with our little community through thick and thin. He had seen it grow, had seen neighbors come and go and then watched as the pendulum swung in reverse and the village slowly receded. "Had I been able to sell my team, wagon and harness that first year in the country, I would have. But I am gol-darn glad I didn't".

These men heralded the first of the settlers to begin the grooming of the Grizzly Bear Prairie. By 1920 a short six years later cabin lights dotted the prairie from Belloy in the east to Manir in the west. The Lerigers, the Prevosts, Murphy's, Dahlens, Tansems, Camerons, Wrolsons, Johnsons, Eli Barrett, Oscar Oakleaf, Charles Geller, Bert Reid and others were in the Wanham area, Belloy way there were the Gilmours, Bankheads, Bolducs, Rouleaus, Selbies, Fortiers, Fergusons, Trumpowers to name a few.

Settlement in the Heart Valley, West Vale, Peoria, and Smoky took place in the twenties and early thirties with the arrival of families and bachelors that included the Parlees, Reiswigs, Munroes, McDonalds, Rottackers, Kandts, Boettchers, Schulzes, Sathers.

Belloy and Wanham became the rail outlets for these people for their grain, cream and livestock and often their social gatherings although each of these settlements eventually had their own schools, halls, stores and post offices.

Wanham was unique not only in this area but probably in all of Canada. Where else could one find a small community with the railroad station and the school a mile and a half apart with the business section, the community hall and the nurses strung out at intervals between. No valid reason for this extended community has turned up in our research. When the South Slope School 3545 later to become Wanham School was built in 1918, P. Tansem had the general store a half mile south of the railroad tracks. The school was situated a mile south of the store. The community hall was placed between the store and the school a full half mile from each. The nurses residence found its spot half way between the hall and the school.

There is no doubt that this strung out community faced an uphill battle to even exist. It made it extremely difficult to service buildings over this distance with power, water and sewer. The only saving feature was that the school children were kept out of the hair of the business people during lunch hour. However the community did exist and especially in 1928-1929 period and when the Lassiter project was in its bloom it took fair strides ahead. Both of these small booms were short-lived. The surrounding farming people have been the staying power for the village. There has always been a close relationship between the farm people and the village residents and this has resulted in the community being recognized as the most community-minded community in Alberta.

I suppose only time will tell if the village will survive. At present it is off the main stream of economic boom that features life in Alberta. The near 60 miles to Grande Prairie exclude it from being a bedroom community. Nothing in the near future shows a promise of growth for Wanham. Only the will of the people will decide whether the village will survive. It will be a hard struggle but then its very existence has always been a struggle.



Louis Tansem, along with his brother Peter and family had come to Wanham in July of 1917. Times were hard and Louis, a watchmaker, had gone to Spirit River to carry on his trade and earn a few dollars. Among Louis' possessions on coming to the Peace was a typewriter and this letter written to brother Olaf in Ambrose, North Dakota. Olaf came later and homesteaded.

Spirit River Alta Feb 18th 1918.

Brother Olaf:

I received your letter, and I see you are planing on comming about middle of next month, I can get room for your horses I think Cameron has room for 7 head Pet Anderson 4 and I think Mr Derieger can room some, it will not take long to build a barn, from fuf lumber, or slabs would do just so it was a faifty good roof on it,

the new saw mill is selling lumber but I do not know wath thay charge, but thay thold Murphy that thay would saw cheaper then we could cut it and hall it, it has been cold a few davs but I think we will soon have warmer wether Mr Gray was saying jesterday if he had enough hay to last to the first of march he would be O K. as the snow will be going of so the stock can rusel his stock has been out all winter, and all thay have had is straw, but thay are looking good, Pet sad that you did not think you would come up when the rest comes, I supose it is pretty hard to get away, but I dont care if, I had the finest farm in that country I would not stop, a day more then I had to, this is going to be the comming country, you will see one of the highest booms in your life this summer, in this country, the trains is over-crouded now and wath will it be when the nice wether sets in? I have been in Spirit River doing watch for a few davs and I am doing fine if I had not had the jewelery business I would been brook now,

Pet Anierson wrote to Dalen to finde out if he could get his drill in the spring, I thold him that one of you would bring a drill and that I was shure that he could jus it he was thinking of buying a drill but I thold him it was foolish as you would not be jusing yours for a long time and I knew he could get it,

I had a letter from Dahlen when he was in Minn, and he sad he would stay a couple weeks so I supos he is home agen now, I will try and write agh about March the first, and ceep you posted on the weather conditions, at present we have about two feet of snow, but I look for a shenuck soon and that will end the snow proposition, I have not started to build my barn it has been to much snow in the timber of course it could be done but I am kind of undesided if I should build from lumber, I dont fancy this log buildings, aspecially when this logs is raw,

Hanna has writtne to Pet and thold him that you had payed him for house rent, I see thay are just as hungry as aver, Pet sent him notice that he was moving out befor his rent was up and that he could go head and rent it but pet stay-ed a few days over, about a week, he rented the building about the twentyeth of May, and he stopt in Flaxton about two weeks after moving out and we was 4 days on the road up here and we landed here the 12th of July so Mr Hanna can figure it out him self, it makes me tired to think of all the crooks and turns pouples try in that country to obtain a Doller, thay should be here a few months, and I think thay would set an introduction to the provincial's

2/

If a man dont Pay his threshbill here all you have to do is to go to the Provincial Police and thay will collact it for you, thay will take grain or any thing thay can find

I have a few small acct in Ambrose let that I have been writting for but thay do not even answer but I have sent it the Mutual Adjustment Co in Minneapolis now and I think thay will make it as agrevating as thay can for them

how is that Myer comming has he made any effort to pay or is he chewing gum and making excuses, I wished you tell the Bank if thay have not done any thing or can not do any thing to send the note to me and I will send it to the M A Co and allso Bangs in Westby,

well I can not think of any thing more to write # so I think I batter cloose , Ojes I see in the papers that thay has past a law now that stock can be shipt in to Canadawethout duty, this year, it might help to reduce the freight,

bast regards to all from us all,

your Brother,



Wanham's station in 1930 with cream cans ready to go. Section foreman's house in background.



Wanham Community Hall originally stood where the U.F.A. service station now stands. It was moved to its present site in the '30s using a stump puller and horses.



Looking north down the nurse's hill and the "road" of mud to Wanham's main street. Bryndzak's home which also housed the shoemaker's shop to the left.



Wanham's first station and dwelling - 1932.



WANHAM MAIN STREET - 1931, looking north: Pete Tansem's store and the hotel on the right. The restaurant, poolroom and Prevost's on the left.



July 1, 1918 saw a group gather to begin the clearing of a site for the South Slope School, No. 3545.



Pete Rousseau's Sod Roof Cabin. Left to Right: Art Ramsfield, Art Tansem, Pete Rousseau, unknown, Sam Ramsfield, Ray Tansem, unknown. This cabin sat southeast of the present school - near the lagoon.



Eli Barrett and Helen Harrington (Faulke) at the well on the nurse's hill.



Ties at Wanham station - 1928.



Repairs being made to the roof of the original Tansem store preparing for the arrival of a Chinese cafe owner, Hen-Lee. Hen operated the cafe for several years until fire destroyed his building along with Sandercock's grocery and hardware store.



Leriger Home. The first cabin in the village of Wanham. Note the livery barn and horse weather vane.



Eli Barrett Shack. Wanham's first school and first nursing home.



Line-up of grain haulers. Time to chat.



Belloy - Taken from the top of an elevator - 1934. Belloy station and stock yard. Bice's post office, Ross Archibald's store, elevator house, Alphonse store, Omar Rouleau's house in the background. North of Rouleau's is a blacksmith shop, south of Rouleau's is a small house of Bodette's. Archy Robinson's house top left on Pierog hill.

[illegible]

Tax notice for Ed Fortier - address Grizzly Bear, May 1923. Belloy was originally named Grizzly Bear. Steele S.D. No. 3787.



Belloy platform with train pulling out. Wm. Ripley, Andy Urness, Nellie Scott, Allan Scott. Ross Archibald's store and Alphonse store in background.



Millie Elliot and Susan Francis.



Steele Stopping Place on the Fortier homestead.



On the Grizzly Bear Prairie in 1916. The Rouleau and Bolduc families travelling.

Communities, Schools and Churches



Heart Valley Church - Built in 1925.



The settler's first view of their home railroad station as they arrived, their neighbours waiting.

ARTICLE, THE GRANDE PRAIRIE HERALD, FEBRUARY 8, 1929

WANHAM EXPERIENCED VERY SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH IN 1928

Wanham entered the year 1929 a vastly different place than it entered the year 1928, when it had about four buildings. During the year past, steady and substantial growth has taken place and today Wanham has reached a very substantial size and is growing from month to month in importance as a distributing center. The rapid development is merely a reflection of the development of the surrounding country, where for the past year there has been great activity in building and in breaking of land.

Wanham of January 1, 1928, consisted of Peter Tansem's general store and post office, Louis Tansem's jewellery repair shop, Ralph Pickard's blacksmith's shop and the UGG elevator with Dave Moore as manager.

Wanham of January 1, 1929, consists of Peter Tan-



Town - 1928. A few buildings in a clearing with a main street. At Left: Pete Tansem store and garage, Louis Tansem Jewellery, R. Pickard garage and the St. Pierre cafe. At Right: J. Baker's Wanalta Cafe, George Ward Insurance, Zak Lemoine's Pool Hall, Wanham Mercantile store - E.J. Harrington, Mgr.

sem's new general store, 28 by 40 feet, the old store being used as a store room. He now carries a greatly increased stock of general merchandise. Louis Tansem occupies one side of the new building with a complete line of hardware and also carries a stock of jewellery and does watch and clock repair. Peter Tansem also has an auto garage and implement shed, 28 by 40 feet, where he carries a full line of Oliver farm implements, Ford and Essex automobiles, Fordson and Allis-Chalmers tractors. He is also agent for Canadian Oil Company and has a modern filling station. He is still the postmaster, is a commissioner and game warden. He has a very neat and comfortable home nearby. Mr. Peter Tansem was the only merchant and postmaster here for many years, when there was only a bare living in it. His perseverance deserves the reward he is now reaping.



The Tansem Livery Barn. Molly and Kathleen Murphy.



Wanham Mercantile Store managed by E.J. Harrington. Mildred Harrington standing in front.

Ray Tansem has a modern livery and feed barn, 30 by 32 feet, and is doing well.

The Wanham Mercantile Company, with Ed Harrington as manager, has a very well constructed large store and carry a full line of general merchandise and hardware. Mr. Harrington is also agent for the Frontier Lumber Company, who carry a full line of lumber and building material.

E.D. Prevost also carries a full line of lumber and



Frontier Lumberyard - 1928. E.J. Harrington - Mgr.



E.D. Prevost home and business place featuring Massey Harris farm implements and radios.

building material and is the local agent for the full line of Massey-Harris farm implements, also several makes of radios.

Zak LeMoine owns and operates a pool hall and barber shop. Ed Fortier is the barber.

J. Baker owns and operates the Wanalta Cafe.

A.D. St Pierre owns and operates a bakery and lunch counter and has an ice cream parlor in connection.

George Ward has a real estate and insurance office and is a notary public.

Thomas Mahar has a very nice little hotel under construction which is now nearly completed.

Ralph Pickard has added to his blacksmith shop both in size and equipment. He also carries a line of IHC farm machinery.

Dave Moore is still manager of the UGG elevator and it is said on good authority that there will be a pool elevator built this year.

It is also said that a cooperative store will be built this summer. Many have already subscribed for stock in this venture.

Wanham, of course, has a good school and also a very good community hall.

Those having good living houses to date are: Peter Tansem, George Ward, Ed D. Prevost, Lewis Tansem, and Ed Fortier. There are some smaller houses.

During the past summer, Peoria, a new post office, was established eight miles south and four miles east of Wanham, at the farm home of George G. Reiswig, who is the postmaster. Prior to 1928 about 750 acres were under



Dave Moore, U.G.G. agent, Hermel Girard and Cliff Tansem in front of the Wanham Hotel, owned by the Girards.

cultivation around this office, or on what is locally known as the north side of the Kakut Creek. In the summer of 1928 an additional 1300 acres were broken and is now ready for crops. Between 600 and 700 acres were also broken on the south side of the creek or near the Heart Valley post office. A great many new settlers have moved in and buildings too numerous to mention have been erected. The school near Peoria post office has an enrollment of 34, with most of the time 100 percent attendance.

Reiswig Brothers have put up a sawmill of 15,000 feet capacity, three miles south of Wanham which is now in operation.

The crops of 1928 in the vicinity of Heart Valley and Peoria, while not as big as the two previous years, were very satisfactory and would in many places be called a bumper crop.

Many new tractors were bought last fall and this winter and it is expected that even last year's big breaking will be doubled in 1929.



Wanham's Main Street - 1932. A.D. St. Pierre standing by his cafe. In the foreground is Ralph Pickard's garage.



First Sports Day in Wanham - 1919. Settlers hauled in any spare planks they had to be used in the building of the dance floor seen in the background. Following the event the lumber was taken home again.

WANHAM'S FIRST SPORTS DAY

Wanham held it's first sport's day, 59 years ago. The event took place on Dominion Day, July 1st, 1919, on the farm of Peter Tansem. It would be located about the centre of where Wanham stands today. A platform was erected for the dancing, and games and races enjoyed. It was kept at that location for a few years, with the platform being put up each year. One year the Sport's Day was held on the Eli Barret farm. Later it took place where the old hall stood at the south-west corner of the Tansem quarter. Still later it was moved to the Leriger property after the hall was moved into town.

JULY 19, 1934

POPULAR WANHAM HOTEL MAN IS CALLED BY DEATH

Death called another Alberta oldtimer on July 13, in the person of Felegene Girard at his home in Wanham. Born in Quebec in the year 1870, he moved to Edmonton in 1900 and freighted for the Hudson's Bay Company on the old Athabasca trail and to Spirit River, later taking a homestead at Legal, Alberta. He entered the hotel business at Wanham in 1929 and has resided here until his death. For the last eighteen months he was in poor health.

Left to mourn his loss, besides his widow, are two daughters, Mrs. J. Johnson at Port Angeles, Wash., and Mrs. L. Johnson at Wanham, two sons, Pat at Gwynne, Alta. and Hermal at home.

The funeral of the late Mr. Girard was held Monday at the Catholic Mission at Spirit River, Rev. Father Nadeau of Tangent officiating. The Requiem High Mass was sung by the Spirit River choir, assisted by several members of the Wanham choir.

The pallbearers were: J. Meyers, A. Roy, A. Potvin, J.J. Harrington, A.D. St Pierre, and A. Fortier.



Wanham Station.

NOVEMBER 28, 1935

BOX SOCIAL NETS TIDY SUM

The Christmas tree Committee held their box social in the Community Hall on November 18. A tidy sum was realized.

The box social was followed by a dance, which, in spite of there being a number of outsiders present, broke up early. It is hoped that in the near future Wanham will revive her good old times.

The dance hall, it is reported, is to be moved into town. That, in itself, will help bring back the dances at least.



Masquerade Dance in Wanham Hall. Mrs. Manson and Minnie Tansem dancing in centre.

Wanham's First Garage...

Repairs to all makes, models
Electric & Acetylene Welding
Imperial Esso Products

Wanham Motors

IN BUSINESS SINCE 1928
Wanham, Alberta

Wanham Centre For Big Area

Friendly, progressive-minded Wanham, spread over twelve acres a stone's throw from Highway No. 49, has come a long way since Pete Tansem opened the first post office back in 1917.

The thriving Central Peace centre, with its stores, entertainment centres, and educational facilities, is the shopping centre for hundreds of families living in an area roughly nine miles wide, and 22 miles long.

Wanham's is a story of steady growth rather than a spectacular overnight mushrooming.

E. D. Prevost, a Wanham businessman, remembers that back in 1916 when his family arrived in the district, they purchased a railway ticket for Mile 332 on Grizzly Bear Prairie. Wanham didn't exist.

He recalls that among the early farmers were Alfred Syr, William Trumpower, George Gilmour Sr., Jack Gray, Oscar Oakleaf, Jack Bramlett, Eli Barrett and the Bankhead and Leriger families. It was in the fall of 1917 that Mr. Tansem opened the post office and first store. The new centre was named Wanham after a railway engineer.

First house built on what is now the town site was built by the Leriger family in 1914. It still stands.

Three distinct tides of settlement washed over the farmlands radiating out from Wanham. In 1920 and 1921, many homesteads were taken up in the district; another big group of settlers took up land in 1928 and 1929.

Most of the land in the Peoria district, south of Wanham, was taken up in 1923.

North of Wanham, the Lassiter project opened up 22,000 acres of land in the Wanham trading area following the last war. Wanham, incidentally, was headquarters for the crews engaged in the gigantic land-clearing project.

It was in 1929, oldtimers recall that Wanham's main street really began to take shape. In that year, the hotel, the lumber warehouse, and a couple of stores were built.

Over the years since, new stores, garages and other business premises have been added. Build-up of the residential area has been similarly gradual but steady.

As a hamlet in a local improvement district, Wanham has no elected representatives to guide its affairs. The Board of Trade - one of the most active in "the Peace" - has been largely responsible for sparking municipal development and improvement.

And many of the facilities of the larger centres have been provided. Telephone and electric power have long been available. A reservoir on the centre's outskirts provides a source of water.

PETER TANSEN

WANHAM MERCHANT
DRY GOODS & GROCERIES

Agent for Essex, Ford Cars & Oliver Machinery

1929

WANHAM MERCANTILE LIMITED

GENERAL MERCHANTS

Terms: CASH

Wanham, Alta. Nov 12 1930

M

Board of Trade

PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE

Date, Dec 10th 1935

M

Address

Bought of

A. Sanderson

I. H. C.
MACHINERY

VICTOR
GRAMOPHONES

WANHAM MERCANTILE
LIMITED
WANHAM
GENERAL MERCHANDISE

DATE, Dec 10th 1935

PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE

BOUGHT OF

Ray Tansem

Date Dec 18th 1935

PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE

BOUGHT OF

Nick Backlund

Date Dec 14 1935

M

Address

Christmas tree com

— PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE —

Plank

Date, *July 2* 194*5*

M *Wright*

Address *Wright*

Account Forwarded *100*

Chapman

Chapman

49

EVERYTHING for the TABLE

BOUGHT OF

PAGE NO. *130*

ORDER 881

Wright

Date, *July 2* 194*5*

Sold to *Wright*

Address *Wright*

Account Forward *130.00*

Wright

22

THANK YOU!

— PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE —

Wanham Dairy

Date, *June 1946*

Wanham Dairy

— PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE —

Wanham Dairy

Date, *June 1946*

— PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE —

A. Mc Ladden

Wood Lumber for C.J. Lampert

Date *Feb 8* 194*4*

— PLEASE KEEP THIS BILL FOR REFERENCE —

A. FIMRITE

General Merchant

WANHAM, - ALBERTA

Date, *Nov. 19* 194*6*

U.G.G. Agent

J.E. Chilton

Wanham, Alta.

DATE, *Nov. 7/45* 194*5*

M^r C.J. Lampert

FEED **E. H. Prevost** **B-A**

GENERAL AGENT, B.A. GAS AND OIL, STOCK FEEDS

WANHAM, ALTA. *Aug 25* 194*5*

Prevost Truck

4/64

DATE, *Oct. 9* 194*6*

M *J. Lampert*

ACCT. FWD

Wanham

DATE, *Oct 11* 194*6*

SUGGESTED 87 HIGHWAY from EDMONTON to DAWSON CREEK



E. J. Harrington

INSURANCE - NOTARY PUBLIC

PHONE 4

Wanham, Alberta



WANHAM GARAGE

R. PICKARD, PROP.
GAS, OIL AND CAR REPAIRS

WANHAM, ALTA. Nov 29 1947

BOUGHT OF

CLEANLINESS QUALITY SERVICE

B. HARRISON

Date Aug. 9 1947

No 552 ED'S GARAGE
ED. SAVERS, PROPRIETOR
WANHAM, ALBERTA

NAME _____ DATE Aug 11 1947
ADDRESS _____ LICENSE NO. _____
TIME WANTED _____ MILEAGE _____
ENGINE No. _____ INSTRUCTIONS _____ SERIAL No. _____

IMPERIAL OIL LIMITED G 2939
EDMONTON, ALTA.

SOLD TO C. J. Lampert STATION Wanham, Alta.
ADDRESS Wanham DATE Apr. 14/43

YOUR ORDER NO. _____ TABLE No. 7 W.P.I.G. AT 80° F 732 TERMS _____
INTEREST 6% PER ANNUM CHARGED ON OVERDUE ACCOUNTS PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO IMPERIAL OIL LIMITED

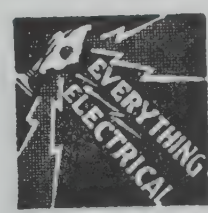
QTY	DESCRIPTION	TAX	UNIT PRICE	PER	AMOUNT
1	St. Imp. 3 Star Pump		10.53		10.53
3	10 to Pump		27.54		27.54
	Prev. Tax		1.80		1.80
	Dams "		1.80		1.80
					5.40
					45.27

LICENSED Petrol OIL DEALER'S NO R-1
PRICES EX. OUR WAREHOUSE. WHEN WE DELIVER GOODS TO THE TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES OUR RESPONSIBILITY CEASES.
RECEIVED PAYMENT: C. J. Lampert CUSTOMER

A. FIMRITE

GROCERIES — DRY GOODS — HARDWARE

Wanham, Alta., Nov 29 1947



HALL'S
RADIO
ELECTRIC



SALES and SERVICE

Wanham, Alta. Nov 7 1947

BOUGHT OF

CLEANLINESS QUALITY SERVICE

Wanham

Date _____ 195

Sold to _____

A. FIMRITE

GROCERIES — DRY GOODS — HARDWARE

Wanham, Alta., Nov 29 1947

M Wanham

Account Forwarded	
<u>break</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>meat</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>pl</u>	<u>40</u>
<u>1 butter</u>	<u>97</u>
<u>cream</u>	<u>65</u>
<u>2 milk</u>	<u>33</u>
	<u>40</u>
	<u>15</u>
	<u>03</u>
	<u>13</u>
	<u>14</u>
	<u>20</u>
	<u>25</u>
	<u>270</u>



Village of Wanham looking west across P. Tansem homestead and the Leriger home quarter. The village main street divides the two homesteads.

THE VILLAGE OF WANHAM

compiled by Sharon Zamorsky

In 1958, the population of Wanham (at that time a Hamlet in Improvement District No. 132) topped 200, making it eligible to become a Village. This was a big step forward, allowing its residents to elect three Councillors to be responsible for their own self-government.

The first meeting, held in Wanham Hall on February 24, 1958, was declared open by the Returning Officer, H.J. Beamer. In his report, he noted the three Councillors elected: Wallace Tansem, John Hall and Ed Harrington. Wally Tansem was elected Mayor and, at the next meeting, George Moojelsky was appointed Secretary-treasurer at an annual salary of \$340.

Almost immediately after the first Council took their Oaths of Office, they were faced with a water problem. A sample sent out for analysis came back, "UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION." Residents were warned and signs were posted by the dugout, "WATER CONTAMINATED. USE AT YOUR OWN RISK." Council proceeded to investigate various filter systems.

On April 23, 1959, a public meeting was called because Council could not agree on how to handle the water problem. The three members of Council and 34 electors attended. A motion was made to hire the Engineering Firm of Nickel, Woodhead and O'Dwyer for the balance of 1959 at a cost of \$250 to complete a report regarding the water situation in the Village of Wanham. The motion was defeated, 17 to 12. Council continued to investigate filter systems.

In January, 1961, Art Tansem was hired to deliver water to Wanham residents. He used his own vehicle and kept a record of how many pails were delivered to each household. The residents were billed on a monthly basis for this service.

In 1962, a petition opposing Water and Sewer Installation in the Village of Wanham was presented to Council. Later that year, a plebiscite vote was held and defeated. In October, a water truck with a 1400 gallon



Water was often a problem in the early days. Louis Tansem owned a fair sized dam within the village boundaries and to protect his water hung the following sign: 6 gal. tank \$1.00, Car washing 25¢, By the pail 3¢, 1 brl 20¢, Splashing 50¢. I am paying tax on this dam and I must charge for the water. Please do not deposit oil in dam.

L.C. Tansem

tank was purchased by Council for \$1100. This was now used by door-to-door delivery of water.

Council continued to disagree about the handling of the water situation in the Village. Several residents took up the cause, attempting to convince others Water and Sewer Installation was necessary for the overall health of the residents.

On August 4, 1964, a ratepayers meeting was called. Council and 40 ratepayers were in attendance. A motion that Council have full authority to proceed with construction of Water and Sewer Installation in the Village of Wanham was carried. At the next regular Council meeting, letters were read protesting this decision. In all, there were 21 signatures.

Finally, on March 4, 1965, Council passed motions for the Installation of Water and Sewer in the Village. In May, Mayor Ed Harrington resigned. In August, Council accepted a tender from Borger Construction in Ed-



Peter Nelson delivering water to the village residents from the well on the hill. Water sold for 5¢ per pail.



Installation of water and sewer to village people.

monton for \$137,000 for the installation and soon running water became a reality.

As a point of interest, in February of 1967, Council approved the following rates for bulk water:

Cream cans	15¢	Barrels	35¢
Residents, 500 gallon tank	\$1.25		
Non-residents, 500 gallon tank	1.50		
Non-residents, 300 gallon tank	1.00		



Village of Wanham Main Street in 1944. Note the ditches and plank sidewalks.

In 1969, the water lines were extended to the school. In 1971, the dugout was enlarged. In 1977 a Water Treatment Plant was installed. And, in 1979, Council approved the extension of the sewer lines to the sportsground.

Maintaining streets and providing adequate drainage was also one of the first things Council had to deal with. In 1958, they purchased a pull-type drag and hired Eddie Didow to keep the streets graded. The same year they accepted a tender from Stan Sather to install culverts where needed. In March of 1959, they bought a second-hand self-propelled grader for \$2850 and hired Arne

Jacobsen as operator for 75¢ an hour.

On August 10, 1969, Council accepted a tender from Odin Construction of Edmonton to install cement sidewalks throughout the Village. In 1962, 10 yards of gravel were purchased for use on main street.

In 1969, Council purchased another grader, 10,000 yards of gravel for the streets and began an annual program to oil the streets in attempt to cut down on the dust. This continued for some years. In 1970, they used 25,000 gallons of street oil.

In the latter '70's, the streets were surfaced with a cold-mix pavement. Since this surface has not proved to stand up well to Wanham's traffic, Council is now looking into the possibly of surfacing the main street with a good quality pavement.

Over the years, the Village Council had also been



Former village councillors John Hall, A.O. Fimrite and Jim Rutherford - 1947.

responsible for lighting the streets. Street lights were installed according to need as the Village developed. In January of 1969, Council approved the replacement of all street lamps with Mercury Vapor 7000 Lumins. However, even lighting the streets was not without problems.

At the annual meeting of 1969, a motion was passed to have all but three street lights turned off in protest against increased power rates. At the annual meeting in 1970, 12 ratepayers turned out to protest the lack of adequate lighting in the streets and a motion was carried to have all street lights turned back on.

For the first few years, Council held their meetings in the Wanham Hall. It wasn't until 1960 that the Village began holding office hours. Secretary-treasurer, Dora Tansum, held these hours in her own home every Wednesday from nine to five.

In 1963, the Village purchased a lot and building to be used for a Municipal Office and storage area for Village machinery. Today, of course, they have a very modern Municipal Office with space provided for the Agricultural Service Board and the Birch Hills Gas Co-op Ltd.

Over the years, the Village Council has been instrumental in providing numerous services for its residents. In their first year of operation, they were successful in their bid to have Wanham included in the Grande Prairie Health Unit, as well as sharing the cost of



Cleanup days were always a part of village life. Left to Right: Mrs. Jess Chilton, Mrs. Earl Ginrich, Yvonne Prevost, Catherine Bennett and Harvey Prevost.

Nursing Services in the district with I.D. No. 132 on a per capita basis. They have also been involved with supplying Homes for the Aged in the Peace River Country and have appointed a Council member or resident to serve on the Spirit River Hospital Board for a number of years.

From the beginning, Council has appointed a Fire Marshall (later changed to Fire Chief) and provided adequate equipment for fire protection as the needs arose. They have also appointed a Building Inspector, a Pest Control Officer, and a representative to the Peace River Planning Commission.

As the interests of the Wanham residents developed, the Village has given financial assistance to the Library and various Recreational Organizations. As a Centennial Project in 1967, they provided a playground and equipment. Since the formation of COCO, Council has been willing to borrow money on COCO's behalf, thus, assisting the organization with lower interest rates.

In May of 1968, the first Recreation Board was formed. This was a joint board for the Village of Wanham and I.D. No. 132 (later changed to I.D. No. 19). The main purpose of the Board was to discuss and channel grant money for recreation. The first board consisted of the following members: Joe Lebeuf, Ken Mick, Bill Sallis, Harold Dick, Arne Jacobsen, Stan Sather and Floris Zahara.

The Village Council has always tried to keep up the quality of life for their Wanham residents. In 1960, a letter was written to the Spirit River School Division objecting to the School Board's decision not to carry out the 1959 Building Program which included the addition of 2 rooms to Wanham School. They also pointed out that the sanitary conditions in the present school were deplorable. Over the years, the Village Council has supported any movement the residents instigated to keep our 12-grade school.

In 1966, a letter was written protesting the closing of

the NAR Station in Wanham. And, in 1969, a letter went out to the Canadian Wheat Board, explaining the grain delivery situation in Wanham and requesting an investigation, more quotas and more cars.

The Village Council was instrumental in obtaining adequate housing for the Agriculture Service Board and the Alberta Wheat Pool. They have always believed that persons earning their living in the Village should also be living in the Village.

During their 22 years of existence, the Village Council has been directly involved in the growth of Wanham. Besides approving several proposals for new businesses, they have tried to promote the opening of others. (e.g. bank, cafe, etc.) They have helped to establish a Trailer Court, Senior Citizen's Housing and Low-cost Housing within the Village. In 1971, they tried to promote Wanham by selling some lots for \$1.00. Of course, these lots were only sold with the stipulation that the purchaser build on them within a certain time.



Sylvia Sallis and Terry Leriger enjoying the annual 'tea' at the library.



Albert Leriger - Mayor of the village at present.



Wanham Volunteer Fire Department - 1979. Left to Right: Jim Goodvin, Jim Goodvin Sr., Don Nybakken, Dale Fleming, Wayne Grusie, Ron Goodvin and Ralph Tschritter. The Volunteer Fire Department - 1982 consists of Active Firefighters: Kerry Barnes, Dale Fleming, Terry Foote, Leon Gauchee, Marcel Gauthier, Wayne Grusie, Dennis Haglund, Jim Hertzler, Mark Moskalyk, Murray Sarson, Fred Weller, Albert Wells, Richard Wells. Auxiliary: Sven Hansen, Peter Leriger, Terry Mitchell, Lloyd Pranskat, Ben Sallis, Bud Sather, Sam Sather, Ray Waters. Rural Route: Allan Laursen, Gerry Lunn, Rolly Reiswig. Honorary: Joe Lebeuf, Bill Lewis, Jim Rutherford and Robert Wilde.

In 1966, the Village Council took over the operation and upkeep of the Wanham Cemetery. Gunder Sveinunggaard was hired to survey the land for plots. Later, the Village purchased treated posts and paint for the "Wanham Cemetery" sign and fence. In 1967, Council approved the use of the east side of the cemetery for the Legion Field of Honor.

The Village of Wanham has come a long way. In 1958, their proposed budget was close to \$15,000, compared to a budget of just under \$115,000 in 1980. Also, in 1958, they paid their Secretary-treasurer \$340 for the year, compared to the 1980 wage of \$8400.

Following is a list of Mayors, Councillors and Secretary-Treasurers who have served the Council to date:

Mayors - Wally Tansem, Ed Harrington, Jim Rutherford, Albert Leriger.

Councillors - John Hall, Ed Harrington, Jim Rutherford, William Hyska, Emil Sather, Albert Leriger, George Shea, Bill Lewis, Octave Prevost, Sam Sather, David Hall, Daniel Lane, Ray Waters, Leon Gouchee.

Secretary-Treasurers - George Moojelsky, Dora Tansem, Ed Harrington, Jim Rutherford, Ken Hollinger, Bill Sallis, Janice Manzuelenko.



Wanham Main Street - 1936.



Wanham station, stockyards and elevators.

O. A. PREVOST

MASSEY-HARRIS IMPLEMENTS

MACHINE SHOP

— TRUCKING

Wanham, Alta., *89-16* 1953



Back Row, Left to Right: Teacher - Miss McFarlane, Hazel Wells, Arnold Ramsfield, Gladys Tansem. Centre: Myrtle Weston, Del Wells, Barry Murphy. Seated: Art Wrolson, Gerhard Wrolson, Gordon MacDonald, Shirley Murphy and Margaret MacDonald.

WANHAM SCHOOL

The first classes were held in Eli Barrett's cabin - grades one to eight. The first teacher was Mrs. Duncan Cameron.

First students were: Jim Murphy, Bert Grey, Kathleen Murphy, Earl Grey, Art Tansem, Iva Gilmour, Ray Tansem, Vera Tansem.

Following is a list of teachers who have taught in the Wanham School since its beginning. The list may contain errors or omissions for which we apologize: G. Grey, Ross Archibald, Ella Scott, Miss McKinley, Thorne Hawkins, Miss McNally, Miss M. McFarland, Dora Jones, Mrs. Laura (Ford) Lampert, Mrs. Orlo Meene, Alice Guthro, Miss Howlett, Miss McBride, Mr. McTavish, Mr. Guttere, Margaret Ramsay, W.D. Jones, Miss Horn, Miss Grace Wishart, Mrs. Lipinski (Settle), Mrs. Mieller, Ruth Sweet, Mrs. Ozan (Prevost) McSweeney, Mrs. Kandt, Maggie Ungstadt, Mrs. Doris (Williams) Tansem (still teaching in Wanham a total of 23 years,) Audrey Weldon, Ben Russell, Miss Alice O'Dwyer, Mrs. Adelaide (O'Dwyer) Zmean, who taught until her retirement in 1976 a total of 27 years, Mr. Korble, Mr. Pearce, Stafka Misunis, Phyllis McLean, Robert Olshanowski, Miss MacDonald, Mr. Sam Wishloff, Mrs. G. Jennings, Grace Sather, Mrs. E. Weshloff, Mr. R. Klappstein, Mrs. J. Klappstein, Miss S. Hnatuik, Miss G. Shannon, Stewart Knox, Mary Knox, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Priegert, Mrs. Priegert, Miss Stevens, Miss Nagel, Miss Krantz, Mr. Campbell, Mrs. Dorcas Watt who taught in Wanham until her retirement in 1976, a total of 19 years, Mrs. Vera Johnson, Mrs. Dorothea Connell, Miss M. White, Mrs. P. Clapp, Mrs. Pat (Moen) Wendland, Mrs. Jessie (Gulick) Sawers still teaching in Wanham, a total of 22 years, Eric Thompson,

Mr. Wade, Mrs. MacPherson, Mrs. Hartwick, Mr. Mike Uhryn, Martin Fritz, Barbara (Connell) Wendland, Joan (Sather) Scott still teaching in Wanham, a total of 17 years, Donna Hedlund, B. Sacks, Ken Mick, Joan Mick, Mr. J.F. Crowdis, Vivian Scott, Dave Clemo, Susan Conrad, Jean Hill, Joan Lebeuf, Mrs. Annie Shaw, Miss P. Cooke, Miss Sehgal, Mr. Balwant Pawa still teaching in Wanham, a total of 12 years, Mr. William Turnbull, Rob Lewis, Mr. George Kushminder, Mrs. Kushminder, Keith McMillan, Dick McLean, Ramona Sather, Mr. G. Outridge, Julie Lutz, Mrs. C. Burton, Ted Fraser, Terry Cooke, Steve Marchand, June Marchand, Alan Marr, Mr. Kowal, Ray Waters, Harvey Brown, Valerie Heustis, Ted Cardwell, Alan Gale, Lou Bollo, Tony Gibbs, Mrs. Beddingfield, Cathy McConnell, Lynn Deneny, Anna Darby.



Left to Right: Miss Grace Wishart, Mr. Evoy and Miss Dever.



Nancy Ruth Horne



Left to Right: Kate Keiler, Laura Settle and Ruth Sweet.





Left to Right: Doris Tansem, Maggie Ungstad, Audrey Weldon.



Sam Wishloff



Left to Right: Doris Tansem, Maggie Ungstad, Ozan McSweeney, Ben Russell.



Left to Right: Doris Tansem, Adelaide Zmean, Mary Knox, Grace Sather, Stewart Knox, Ozan McSweeney, Doreen Thompsen and Eric Thompsen.



Adelaide (O'Dwyer) Zmean



Kathleen Stevens



Back Row, Left to Right: Mrs. Jennings, Mrs. Elsie Wishloff, Sam Wishloff, Ozan McSweeney and Miss Hnatiuk. Front Row: Mrs. Dorcas Watt, Doris Tansem, Adelaide Zmean, Grace Sather and Lorna Boettcher.



Ellen Krantz



Ray Heaton and Rob Lewis.



Margaret and George Kushminder.



Left to Right: Rob Lewis, Joan Scott, Maurice Laurin and Adelaide Zmean.

WANHAM SCHOOL DAYS

by Clara (Hauser) Johnson

It has always been my habit to say that I attended school "from one to half-past twelve" -- which would seem rather backward if it referred to time, but it is only my quaint way of referring to my grades. Grade 12 was not taught in Wanham in those long-ago days, and "half-past twelve" means that I took some subjects in that



The Original South Slope School No. 3545. Miss Grace Wishart and her pupils: John Manzulenko, John Putio, Norman Olson, John Christensen, Bernice Wiegel, Edward Jakubowski, Steffa Jakubowski, Marvin Kandt, Nick Manzulenko, Annie Lee, Mary Putio, Mary Stepaniuk, Lily Nelitz, Vern Lampert, Doreen Trump, Ella Olson, Bobby Metz, Helen Stepaniuk, Ernest Nelitz and Stella Lee.

grade by correspondence. If anyone is interested in dates, I began attending school in 1929 and finished in 1938/39, if one counts the correspondence course. (Yes, I realize that these figures do not come out to the requisite twelve - - but in those days children were sometimes allowed to take two grades per year).

My first schoolhouse was a small frame building located about one mile south of Wanham; it later became a teacherage -- and still later, I am told, was destroyed by fire. Into this small one-room school were packed about 30-35 pupils in grades 1-11, one teacher for all grades and all subjects. Some of my schoolmates, during those happy halcyon years, were Ozan and Gay Prevost, Paul Leriger, the MacDonalds (Margaret, Gordon and Ethel), Montheleene Cameron, Barbara and Lauraince Johnson, Rosella and Victor Wiegel, Julien St. Pierre, Vera and Bill Laughy, Buddy and Ethel Metz, Shirley Murphy, Cliff and Stanley Playdon, Helen and Steve Pizarchuk,



School in the Lumberyard Office. Back Row, Left to Right: Gordon MacDonald, Stan Playdon, Vera Laughy, Clara Hauser, Ozan Prevost. Front Row: Gay Prevost, Paul Leriger, Rosella Wiegel, Ethel MacDonald, Shirley Murphy.



School Concert - 1945. Left to Right: Lorraine Sather, Alex Posty, Maxine Quamme, Mary Manzulenko, Annette Prevost, Frank Kaspro and Beverley Fowler.

and the Sanoski children. My first teacher was Mrs. Laura Lampert, who was not only an excellent teacher but, to my delight, she used to read aloud to us ... I have vague memories of becoming so enthralled by a story, once, that despite being a desperately shy child I crept up to the front and leaned against her as she read. (This may or may not have actually happened -- it was a long time ago!) After Mrs. Lampert, there was a succession of teachers, most of them being unable to put up with us for more than one to two terms -- among them Miss Howlett, Mrs. McBride, Mr. William McTavish, and Mr. William Guttierrez.

During the latter part of my school days, when the district grew to the point where there were enough children to warrant two teachers, Miss Margaret Ramsay taught the lower (elementary) grades, and Mr. Guttierrez taught high school. This situation finally resulted in the blossoming of a romance between the two teachers, with most of the pupils taking a proprietary interest in developments. We always knew when things were not going smoothly, because Mr. Guttierrez' temperament gave him away; I can't speak for Miss Ramsay but perhaps some of the "younger fry" would remember! However, all went well; they became engaged (there was the usual bridal shower attended by all the ladies of the community, and even some of us girls from high school) and were married in Edmonton at the close of the term. (I believe Mr. and Mrs. Guttierrez are now living in Sherwood Park).

My high school years were spent in a school-room which had once been the lumberyard office, in "beautiful downtown Wanham". Here Mr. McTavish, and later Mr. Guttierrez, struggled to instill a love of learning into about fifteen sometimes-recalcitrant teenagers ... and despite a lack of "proper teaching tools, inadequate facilities, and other hardships", were moderately successful. The lumberyard school-room was distinguished by the fact that it was extremely hot in summer, and absolutely *frigid* in winter. During cold weather, most of us wore heavy "woolies" and ski-suits, with innumerable pairs of socks and moccasins at one end and toques and scarves at the other -- all this clothing was necessary not only to survive the long walk most of us had to make to

get to school, but also to survive the day in school. The room would be so cold in the morning that we would all huddle around the old woodburning stove for a few minutes, scribblers spread over the top until they were heated -- then we would dash to our desks with them and quickly sit down on these makeshift heating-pads. (So what were a few hardships? Probably good for us.)

Schooldays were not entirely given over to serious study, I must confess ... there was also fun and games and mischief. In fact, some people seem inclined to think there was more of the latter than of the former -- but this is only partially true. It is more amusing to remember the "mischief". For some peculiar reason I seemed to get blamed for a great many crimes through what the teacher was fond of calling "circumstantial evidence". If there was a window broken, I was blamed -- even though someone else pushed me through it. If there was a fancy little cartoon on the blackboard, I was immediately called on the carpet -- despite the fact that there were four or five other cartoonists in the class. (In those days I had not yet acquired the ability of talking myself out of such crises).

Nearly everyone finds, when reminiscing in later life about their schooldays, that they are far more likely to remember the amusing escapades that took place than the times they made 90% in Trig or History or whatever. One of our favorite tricks was as follows: It is a bright sunny day, the teacher is at the blackboard, back turned to the class, writing busily. Twenty little students are seated at their desks, ostensibly pegging away at their lessons. Suddenly a number of tiny mirrors appear and are exposed to the sunlight in such a manner that they are all aimed at the same spot on the teacher's bald pate. (My old schoolmates will all recognize the long-suffering teacher of whom I speak!) After a few minutes of this treatment, and a bit of squirming as the heat becomes more intense, the teacher turns and gazes fixedly at the class -- who, needless to say, are innocently absorbed in their studies. This mild form of torture was never overdone and, I believe, although suspected was never detected.

In spite of all evidence to the contrary, however, we did study occasionally -- not any more than absolutely necessary, but enough to get by. I can't remember many of us (if any) failing our June exams; there would have to be a great deal of "cramming" in preparation for them, but we always managed to pass ... and then there was the heartfelt feeling of relief that we could relax until next term. There were no music festivals, no track meets, no school parties, no graduation dances ... the only big extracurricular event was the annual Christmas Concert. But let me tell you this, our Christmas Concerts were "something else", as they say nowadays -- and this was true of the concerts at other nearby schools as well, so that people made a point of trying to attend, and enjoy, them all. And if we did not have all the "perks" that the children have in school in this present day and age, we did not seem to miss them ... or rather, we didn't know we were missing anything. We were young, and enjoyed what we had.

I hope everyone has the happy memories that I have of my schooldays. If my contemporaries are like me, they

have almost forgotten the extremes of heat and cold in the classroom ... the long walk to school, through drifts in winter and floods in spring ... Instead, we remember all the fun: the secret clubs and secret codes we used ... snow-forts and snowball fights repelling all invaders ... softball games in summer ... and even the quiet hours of study. This is a part of our lives that nothing can take away from us -- a link in the chain that will always bind together those of us who attended Wanham School in the days prior to 1940.

HISTORY OF THE WANHAM SCHOOL

by Shirley Joan Scott

INTRODUCTION

The Wanham School was built one mile south of the Village of Wanham.

In 1958 it became incorporated into the village, thus ending a long debate over the school's location outside the boundary of the village. Wanham is located almost equal distance between Grande Prairie and Peace River, as the crow flies. It is situated on the Spirit River Prairie, twenty-five miles east of Spirit River town. The area of the present centralized school at Wanham includes the flat fertile land north of the Birch Hills to the Burnt River and south to the Smoky River. It extends east about ten miles and west to the Burnt River.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

By 1917 there were a few families with school age children settled in the Wanham area. In 1917 a school district was formed called South Slope School District number 1545. School opened in the fall of 1917 in a house about one and one half miles east of Wanham. The house belonged to a bachelor, Eli Barrett, who was away working at the time. It was necessary to have at least seven students before a school could be started. There were six school age children in the area: Art, Vera and Ray Tansem; Jim and Kathleen Murphy and Bert Grey. About five miles east of the school a family called Gilmour had a school age daughter Iva. Iva rode her pony to the new school to make up the required seven students.

Mrs. Duncan Cameron, although she was not a qualified teacher, was hired to teach the school. The school board consisted of three bachelors: A. St. Pierre, Louis Tansem, and Hans Mortensen.

Although it was difficult to get building material during the war years, the settlers around Wanham cleared the site for the new school in July of 1918 and commenced to build the one room school which opened in the spring of 1919. The school was built about one mile south of the little settlement. The lumber was purchased from McCrimmon's mill about six miles east. Hans Mortensen signed a one hundred dollar note to enable the school board to purchase the lumber. The school was built by

volunteer labour; H. Mortensen, F. Murphy, D. Cameron, and C. Olson doing most of the building. Miss Gracia Grey was hired as the teacher of the new school. Miss Grey was not a qualified teacher either. The first qualified teacher was Ross Archibald who came in the early 20's. The new school operated from April or May to November or December, depending upon the weather.

The school house was the centre of social life in the new community. Early settlers talk about the dances that lasted till 8 o'clock in the morning. Box socials and shadow socials were popular ways to raise money for community and school projects. Chris Bankhead recalled one box social held in 1923 to raise money to buy a radio for the school.

The school operated with one room and one teacher until about 1936 when a temporary classroom was opened in the Frontier Lumber Office where grades seven to nine and some grade ten subjects were taught.

BUILDING AND EXPANSION OF THE SECOND SCHOOL

By 1939 the school was becoming too crowded and the temporary classroom cold and uncomfortable. Debentures were issued for \$2,500.00 to finance the building of a new two room school. There was some difficulty in selling these debentures but they were finally purchased by the Frontier Lumber Company enabling the school board to build the new school. The total cost of building the new school, which included work done by people who owed taxes, was \$4,328.46.

The new two room school was opened in the fall of 1939. These two classrooms were for grades one to three and grades four to eight. Grade nine to eleven would be taught in the old school. The principal was W.S. Jones and the intermediate teacher was Miss Horne.

The school board received twenty-three applications for the position of primary teacher (all female) indicating that there was not a teacher shortage at that time. Miss Grace Wishart was hired to teach the primary grades.

The high school offered the following subjects for credit in grades ten and eleven: English 1, Social Studies 1, Health and Physical Education 1, Latin 2, General Math 2, Physical Education 2.

Four high school students from other districts attended school in Wanham raising the total to fifteen students in the high school. This practice continued until centralization in the 1940's and 50's.

In May, 1939, the South Slope School Board requested that a rural high school district be set up but this was denied by the department as it was felt the area and distances involved were too great.

The salaries paid the teachers were \$700 for the primary teacher, \$800 for the intermediate teacher, and \$900 for the senior teacher. The minimum salary to be paid a teacher was \$840 per year therefore the board had to request permission from the department to pay a lower salary.

An increase in population plus the centralization of two schools, Steele School and Royal Winner School, necessitated the expansion of the South Slope School.



1938-39. Back Row, Left to Right: LeRoy Tansem, Doris Blonski, Norma MacDonald, Milton Metz, Teddy Lipinski, Tom Cameron and George Nelitz. Second from Back: Audrey Bryndzak, Betty Trump, Frances Jakubowski, Kazimera Jakubowski, Leola Fowler, ?, Catherine Metz. Third from Back: Helen Jakubowski, Roy Trump, Buddy Playdon, Rob Sawers, Jack Cameron. Front Row: Clare Lampert, Doreen Playdon, Eugenius Lipinski, Lewis Wiegel, Matt Bryndzak, Wally Tansem and Stan Sawers.



Wanham Girls - 1937. Left to Right: Norma MacDonald, Catherine Metz, Blanche Tansem, Jean Harrington, Betty Trump, Kathleen Bryndzak, Leola Fowler, Audrey Bryndzak, Doris Blonski. Background: Helen Farwell.



Grades 1, 2 and 3 - 1939-40. This class includes the following students: Elaine Harrington, Gloria Johnson, Ella Olson, Harry Lee, Helen Bryndzak, Kathleen Bryndzak, Annie Lee, Vern Lampert, John Johnson, Ernest Nelitz, John Manzulencko, Steffa Jakubowski, Ella Thorin, Knut Olson, Jim Sawers, Mary Putio, Marvin Kandt and John Christenson.

In 1946 two classrooms, a library and a science laboratory were added to the existing school. The old school was then converted into a teacherage. The four classrooms were primary grades one to three, grades four to six, junior high school grades seven to nine and high school grades ten to twelve. B.B. Russell was the principal and the first teacher in Wanham to teach grade twelve subjects.

In 1952-53-54 four more schools in the area closed and the students were bussed to Wanham. These schools were Heart Valley, West Vale, Mersey and Peoria Schools. This increase in population necessitated a further expansion of the school. Mersey was moved and connected to the existing four room school. Ralph Johnston bought the West Vale School and used it for a house on his farm.

THE PRESENT SCHOOL

A new Wanham School was started in 1955 north of the old school. The first part built consisted of two classrooms, a gymnasium, offices and indoor sanitary facilities. In 1961-62 two more classrooms, a science laboratory and better equipped sanitary facilities were added.

The school was expanded again in 1965 when six new classrooms, offices, staffroom, library and storage areas were built to complete the present building. Part of the old school was used until the 1970's. By this time the population of the school had begun to decrease permitting the closure and eventual dismantling and removal

of the old building. Part of the school was torn down and used to build a new community hall, while part was left intact and moved to be used as an exhibit building for the annual Plowing Match.

The population of the Wanham School was at its height in the late 1960's when the total number of students registered reached 287 with thirteen full time and one half time teacher. The reduced population is due to the growth of larger farm units and thus fewer families with children. For the last two or three years the population of the school has remained more or less constant at about 195 students. The school now has eleven full time and one part time teacher. This included a teacher for the Resource Room which opened this year.

SCHOOL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Wanham has always had a very active school. The students in the past were involved in Musical Festivals, Christmas Concerts, and other forms of educational entertainment. The school has always been particularly interested in it's sports program. Trackmeets, skating, curling and softball were the main sports activities before the gymnasium was built. Volleyball, basketball, badminton, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking and cross country racing have been added during the years.

The students have been active in raising money to improve facilities in the school. The school's first duplicator, record player, plus other things such as a sound system, a trampoline and library books have been purchased through student efforts.

The Student's Union has sponsored students to participate in the U.N. Conferences in Banff, Reach for the Top, and helped raise money for many educational field trips.

CENTRALIZATION

South Slope School district became part of the Spirit River School Division at it's inception in 1942. The Spirit River School Division number 47 was set up in 1941 and commenced operation in 1942. The first secretary-treasurer was John Paul. The trustee elected from the Wanham area was E.T. Sather. The inspector responsible for the new school division was E.S. Stehlin who was also inspector for the McLennan School Division.

Centralization of instruction in the Wanham area began in 1944. During the war years the school division was having great difficulty hiring teachers for many schools. Many of the small district schools were forced to take correspondence with a supervisor. In 1944 two of the closest schools, Steele School (3187) to the east and Royal Winner (4725) to the west, were closed and the students bussed to Wanham. The first bus was a truck with a closed in box. The roads were poor in summer and often drifted in the winter.

In 1953 Heart Valley (4356) and in 1952 Mersey (4272) Schools were closed. Heart Valley is about fifteen miles south and Mersey ten miles south and west of Wanham. West Vale School (4423) south and west, closed in 1952.



South Slope High School - 1942. Teacher: Miss Settle (Mrs. Lipinski). Left to Right: Merlin Wozniak, Morris Sinkwich, Wally Tansem, Teddy Lipinski, Betty Trump, Johnny Welykocy, Audrey Bryndzak, Helen Francis, Eileen Murphy, Edith Lee, Bertha Sveinungaard, Doris Blonski, Kazimira Jakubowski and Norma MacDonald.



Christmas 1945 - Grade Nine Girls. Left to Right: Edith Bush, Steffa Jakubowski, Mary Putio, Gloria Johnson, Clare Lampert, Donalda Bozarth, Bertha Sveinungaard, Lois Hutchison and Dorothy Metheny.

Peoria School (4885), about fifteen miles south and east of Wanham, closed in 1956. Lassister School (4962), built for the children of veterans who settled in the Lassiter farm project north of the Burnt River, was closed in 1965.





Class of 1942. Teachers: At Left - Grace Wishart. At Right - Mr. Eyoy. Back Row, Left to Right: Milton Metz, Wally Nelitz, Teddy Lipinski, Tom Cameron, Kathleen Cameron, George Nelitz, Dave Tansem, Bill Wozniak, LeRoy Tansem. Second Row: Lily Nelitz, Ella Thorin, Lewis Wiegel, Mary Putio, Ella Olson, John Christensen, Steffa Jakubowski, Jim Sawers, John Manzulenko, Knut Olson, Clare Lampert, Kathleen Bryndzak, Rob Sawers, Eugenius Lipinski, Helen Jakubowski, Stan Sawers, John Jakubowski, Wally Tansem, Mary Bryndzak and Merlin Wozniak. Third Row: Gloria Johnson, John Johnson, Stella Lee, Annie Lee, Elaine Harrington, Edward Jakubowski, Norman Olson, Nick Manzulenko and Doreen Trump. Front Row: Helen Stepaniuk, Helen Bryndzak, Vern Lampert, Bernice Wiegel, Eunice Johnson, Harry Lee, Robbie Metz, Marvin Kandt and John Putio.



At Left: 1945 - Grades 4-5-6. Back Row, Left to Right: Annie Lee, Vicky Karpinski, Ella Olson, John Christensen, John Manzulenko, Gunder Sveinunggaard, Nick Manzulenko and Edward Jakubowski. Second Row: John Kaspro, Delbert Bozarth, Patsy Leriger, Frances Metz, Phyllis Sather, Margaret Christensen, Doreen McCarthy, Robbie Metz and Jim Sawers. Third Row: Eunice Johnson, Bernice Wiegel, Joan Sather, Elaine Harrington, Wilma Bush, Sheena Sawers, Stella Lee, Helen Kaspro, Betty Olson. Front Row: Norman Olson, Sam Sather, Harry Lee, Edgar Nelitz, Vern Lampert and John Putio.



Wanham's First School Bus.



Left to Right: Eugenius Lipinski, Stan Sawers, Alex Kozeluk, Joe Manson, B.B. Russell, Bill Manson, Nick Sinkevich, Delbert Bozarth and Knut Olson.



Back Row, Left to Right: Lily Nelitz, Clare Lampert, Steffa Jakubowski, June Stokes, Betty Rae. Front Row: Dolores Chilton, Kay Bice, Florence Ayling, Doris Ayling and Dolly Bozarth.



Wanham High School - 1952. Back Row, Left to Right: B.B. Russell, Stanley Stepaniuk, Vern Lampert, Sam Sather. Middle Row: Ruby Rutledge, Margaret Christensen, Sheena Sawers, Anna Johnson, Elaine Harrington, Pat Leriger, Lorna Hoberg, Hazel Johnson. Front Row: Betty Olson, Joan Sather, Delphine Lampert, Ramona Russell, Mary Richter, Wilma Bush and Eunice Johnson.



Grades 4 and 5 - 1949. Back Row, Left to Right: Arne Jacobsen, Elmer Bankhead, Johnny Metz, Tony Korable, Taras Putio, Carl Gilmour, Albert Wells. Middle Row: Dorothy McCarthy, Beulah Bankhead, Bonnie Ewanchuk, Barbara Karpinski, Erna Bankhead, Helen Sveinunggaard, Maxine Quamme, Ilene Kasprow. Front Row: Beverley Fowler, Alex Ewanchuk, Roger Russell, Ruth Harrington, Mary Manzulenko, Frank Kasprow, Alex Posty and Lorraine Sather.



The teacherage at Wanham School.



Grades 1-2-3 - 1951. Teacher: Adelaide Zmean. Back Row, Left to Right: Eddie Kasprow, Raymond Thompson, Raymond Elhorn, Ray Ranestad, Stanley Bobier. Second Row: Billy Waters, David Russell, Harold Wiegel, Larry Duby, Marilyn Webber, Gloria Bolduc, Barbara Hoberg, Pat Fowler, Aline Prevost, Jimmy Elhorn, ?, Jim Sather and Ted Fowler. Third Row: Donna McCalder, Louise Boisvert, Ruth Uhryn, Patsy Panko, Sharon Russell, Hattie Kasprow, Katie Kasprow, Shirley Bayers, Eva Uhyrn, Ellen Bennett, ?, Gladys Rutledge, June Nicholson, Betty Wells. Front Row: Kenny MacDonald, Raymond Bolduc, Paul Leriger, Bobby Neilson, Gordon Anderson, Lonnie Bankhead, Gordon Tansem, Vernon Best, Egil Ranestad, Melvin Jacobsen.



Wanham School - 1953. Back Row, Left to Right: Alex Ewanchuk, Denny Sather, Richard Bobier, Harvey Parlee, Donald Lunn, Alex Posty. Front Row: Lynn Harrington, Sandra Connell, Bernice Jennings, Laura Webster, Sybil Parlee, Viola Rutledge and Sharon Quamme.



Grades 1 and 2 - 1954. Teacher: Adelaide Zmean. Back Row, Left to Right: Norman Wszychyshyn, Glenn Curley, Alfred Bobier, Dwayne Sorgen, Marlene Tansem, Marilyn Bouchard. Middle Row: Vernon Best, Jean Rutledge, Levola Bankhead, Donna Prevost, Jeanette Bayers, Dale Sather, Donna Parlee. Front Row: Wayne Johnson, Linton Parlee, Kim Bramlet and Clifford Hucul.





Back Row, Left to Right: Theresa Johnson, Mildred Hoberg, Helen Sveinunggaard, Bonnie Ewanchuk, Shirley Kushnerak, Ruth Harrington. Front Row: Arne Jacobsen, Raymond Johnson, Hillis Johnson and Lawrence Uhryn.



Spring Prom - The Queen and Her Princesses. Left to Right: Linda Urness, Penny Fimrite, Karen Sather, Peggy Connell, Darlene Urness and Judy Hill.



Grade 10 - 1953. Back Row, Left to Right: Lorraine Sather, Bev Fowler, Katie Scriba, Beulah Bankhead, George Osberg and Edward Pierog. Front Row: Mary Manzulenko, Annette Prevost, Maxine Quamme, Lorraine Olson, Muriel Hoberg. Missing: Albert Wells.



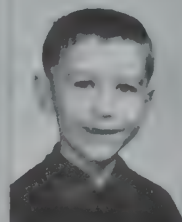
Graduation - 1980. Back Row, Left to Right: Karen Tansem, Carol Hillaby, Debbie Sorgen, Kelly Tansem, Koreen Tansem and Leanne Putio. Front Row: Darrel Sather, Roger Sather, Larry Scriba, Dwight Goodvin, Ken Brissard, James Bennett, Greg Manzulenko and Shawn Tschritter.



Jim Rutherford receiving the keys to the new school bus from Emil Sather and Ed Harrington.



Homecoming - 1979. Classmates of the '40s get together. Back Row, Left to Right: Edith Lee, Doris Blonski, Helen Francis, Norma MacDonald, Joyce Lee. Front Row: Wally Tansem, Grace Wishart and Morris Sinkwich.



Grade 2 - 1964. Top Row, Left to Right: Teacher - Doris Tansem, Gerald Manzulenko, Gwen Zmean, Doug Heitrich, Douglas Sather, Brenda Berg. Missing: ?. Second Row: Earl Blois, Laurie Dick, David Urness, Stanley Pierog, Casey Pierog, Karen Peebles. Third Row: Louise Roteliuk, Dale Sorenson, Duane Huether, Patsy Watson. Fourth Row: Wendy Albert, Phillip Roteliuk, Richard Shaw, Olive Eidse. Bottom Row: Virginia Shaw, Linda Scriba and Janet Bilinski.



Girls' Provincial "A" Schools Volleyball Champions - 1979. Back Row, Left to Right: Coach Ray Waters, Linda Sather, Wendy Laursen, Sandra Sveinunggaard, Dixie Lee Foote. Middle Row: Leanne Putio, Kelly Tansem, Carol Hillaby, Karen Tansem. Front Row: Maureen Aley and Koreen Tansem. Students in Wanham School have always been keen participants in sports.



Boys' Provincial "A" Schools Volleyball Champions - 1980. Back Row, Left to Right: Mark Sather, Coach Ray Waters, Rodney Heitrich, Don Keller. Front Row: Paul Reum, Greg Dick, David Zamorsky, Craig Sather and Douglas Zamorsky. Wanham boys were also provincial winners in 1978.

JUNE 30, 1938

SCHOOL BUILDING NEARING COMPLETION

Wanham's new school building is well on the way to completion and will be ready to take care of the pupils of the district on September 1.

A two-room building, 24 by 70 feet, with full basement is situated on the school grounds one mile south of the town, which is considered one of the nicest building spots in the Peace River Country.

The building is of frame construction, finished outside with bevel siding and the inside finish is of gyproc and is contracted by Frontier Lumber Company who have subcontracted the carpenter work to Contractor Leadbetter of Grande Prairie.

Already water has been struck in the basement at a depth of about 14 feet, and it is one of the few schools in this country which will have fresh water right in the building.

It is expected there will be an enrollment of about 65 pupils when the new term opens and will cover grades one to eleven under the capable principalship of W.L. Gutierry, with Miss M. Ramsay in charge of junior grades.

The board have had a hard time providing accommodation during the past five years. The one-room school built by volunteer work and material about twenty years ago has been crowded out and the board have had the senior room operated in the Frontier Lumber Company's office for the past two years, under very trying conditions for both teachers and pupils. With the debenture markets closed, the board have had to try and finance the new building from current revenue and it is a great satisfaction to both ratepayers and the board to see their efforts crowned with success.



The New Wanham School.

CENTRALIZATION OF SCHOOLS IN THE WANHAM AREA

by Elaine Dick

Until World War II, rural students in Alberta attended one room schools in the country, which offered grade nine. If they desired a high school education, they were

Central Peace Tax Payers Protective Association

MEMBERSHIP No.

100

Name WALLY TANSEM

DATE

NOV 4

1965

Membership card - Central Peace Taxpayer's Protective Association - an organization opposed to the further centralization of schools.

forced to move to a larger centre, usually boarding with a family there. Some school divisions operated dormitories for rural students.

During the war the shortage of teachers became acute and many schools resorted to correspondence lessons and supervisors. This teacher shortage, and the need to provide high school education facilities for rural students, forced the Department of Education to look at alternatives.

One of the alternatives was to centralize instruction and the Department chose this course. It involved closing several one room schools and bussing students to one centralized location. Courses to grade 12 were offered and students could remain at home and finish high school.

In the Wanham area, centralization began in 1944, when Steele school east of Wanham, and Royal Winner to the west were closed. In 1953, Heart Valley school was closed. Mersey and West Vale in 1952 and Belloy and Peoria in 1956.

These one room schools had been the centre of the rural communities involved and not all taxpayers were happy about this move. In fact, many were very bitter and unhappy. They felt it would mean the end of their community. In the Belloy area, many people opposed centralization and their school was one of the last closed.

Everything went well at Wanham school for some years, until Spirit River School Division made plans for further centralization. This time it was to be just the high school students who would be taken to a large centralization high school in Spirit River or Rycroft.

This time people in the entire Wanham area reacted angrily. They refused to consider further centralization mainly because of the long distances students would have to be bussed.

In order to raise money for the proposed new high school, the Spirit River Division had to borrow a large amount of money. They had to have the approval of the taxpayers for a debenture by-law. This approval had to be obtained by holding a plebiscite which needed a simple majority to pass.

At this time, a group of concerned ratepayers from the area (all over the Division) met in Wanham to form an organization known as the Central Peace Taxpayers Protective Association. The function of the group was to raise opposition to further centralization of schools.

From the time of its inception until the high school was finally built, the C.P.T.P.A. was engaged in numerous very heated debates.

The first vote on the centralization was held in 1964. It was defeated.

In 1966, the school board, faced with the financial pressures of operating many small high schools, again called for a debenture by-law. Again it was defeated.

Then in 1968 the proposal was again raised. This time the entire board, with the exception of the Rycroft member Mrs. Anne Hemingway, resigned. The Department of Education appointed an official trustee, Mr. Ron Penrice, to handle the affairs of the school division. Mr. Penrice immediately set about the task of centralizing the high schools.

The debate raged all during 1968 with Mr. Penrice holding meetings to extol the virtues of centralization and the C.P.T.P.A. advising of the disadvantages. A plebiscite was called for November 15, 1968. The C.P.T.P.A. sent an open letter to all ratepayers a few days prior to the vote, branded as "hate literature" by Mr. Penrice. The C.P.T.P.A. responded hotly and succeeded in obtaining an apology in the daily newspaper. The vote was held. It was defeated once more.

In the spring of 1969, Mr. Robert Clarke, Minister of Education in the Social Credit government, overruled the plebiscite and the high school was built in Spirit River. However, the Department agreed to leave Wanham High School where it was and at the present time it is still operational.

A BIT OF HISTORY

by Lily G. Sather

Although affiliation with the Canadian Sunday School Mission didn't take place until the 1950's, God's work was still going on in the West Vale District.

As early as the 1920's several different denominations began sending their servants here.

The first service held in the district was conducted by a Lutheran pastor, a former classmate of the late Paul Nagel.

United Church student ministers came during the summer months and ladies from the Anglican Sunday School by post toured the area keeping in contact with their young correspondence pupils.

A well beloved little Scottish Presbyterian Deaconess ministered here. Besides holding services, she organized a Mission Band at the school and conducted Bible Camp during the summer.

In 1937 Robert Parlee, with a Baptist leaning, left his pastorate in Saskatchewan and moved to West Vale and began holding services at the Gliege home in Peoria and later in West Vale.

David Fredlund, a popular radio evangelist on C.F.G.P. at the time, was invited into the district and held two well attended services in the school. Later, Mr. Einarsen, secretary treasurer of the Peace River Bible Institute, held a series of meetings and it was to one of these meetings that Bud and Carmen Dennis, fresh out of



The Nels Lee house built in 1928. It was moved to Wanham and used as a chapel for 20 years.

Bible School, came to West Vale for the first time. They decided to stay and settled in Belloy and served the area for seven years. It was the fall of 1947 that work on the new West Vale Gospel Mission was started and was completed in time for the Christmas program.

It was under their leadership that plans were formulated to open a work at Wanham. They donated a lot there and Robert Parlee donated a house, which was moved to Wanham, renovated and served as the first Bethel Chapel for over 20 years.

Miss Beverly Erickson (a candidate for the mission field) and Miss Rosella Heppner came to work with the children at Wanham and were followed by Anne Pockorowski and Dorothy Percival and Danny Zylla.

It was while Bud Dennis was still serving here that Mr. Lloyd Hanson, (who was at that time the Provincial Director of the Canadian Sunday School Mission) accompanied Bud to West Vale. As a direct result of that meeting the group affiliated with Canadian Sunday School Mission.

In 1954 Eric and Doreen Thomsen came directly from Bible School to work at Wanham and spent the major



The congregation at Bethel Chapel - 1969.

part of the next nineteen years with this congregation.

A returned missionary from Japan, Mr. Doug Dawson, spent one 10 month period here. Filling the pulpit on holidays, and whenever there was a vacancy for any other reason, was the ever faithful Sam Parlee.

In 1959, for various reasons, several families of the congregation had left West Vale. The church there was closed down and the group centralized with Wanham. The original chapel at times served three different congregations. In addition to our own, the Evangelical Lutheran and Anglican groups met there.

It was while the Thomsens were still here that the decision was made to build a new church in the village. Then Eric was promoted to the position of Provincial Director of the Canadian Sunday School Mission and transferred to Three Hills - Norman and Darlene Church came to Wanham from Prairie Bible Institute. Norman became the first full time pastor to serve Bethel Chapel.

Norman and Darlene worked tirelessly toward the erection of the new building as well as in their ministry here.

Construction of the new church has been a community effort with both men and women participating. Mr. McNaughton, former principal of Peace River Bible Institute, assisted with the wiring; Buck Parlee made the stained glass windows and many other good friends assisted in various ways.

We are humbly grateful to God for our new church and for the fact that it is fully paid for. No money has had to be borrowed, but the Zero Hour Project provided a much appreciated gift of somewhat under \$3,000 at a very opportune moment, for which we say a special "Thank you!"

Deep appreciation is extended to all of the pastors, Sunday School teachers, leaders of the Young Peoples' group, those who prayed and to those who provided "taxi" service throughout the years that has made it possible for many, many youngsters to attend.

We appreciate too all those who brought floral tributes and faithfully worshipped here Sunday by Sunday.

We thank God for the many people who through the years have accepted Christ as their Savior because of the work here. We are also thankful for the twenty or more who have taken formal Bible training and for the ones who have served the Lord both in the foreign field and at home.

'To God be the Glory - Great things He hath done!'



Original Church of Jehovah's Witnesses (the vacated farm home of Dave Bolduc Jr.) located midway between Wanham and Belloy. Picture taken after a Sunday meeting in 1945. Back Row, Left to Right: Stanley Karpinski, Herb Aley, Tony Saluga, Ira Gilmour, Oscar Oakleaf, Hans Mortenson, Desmond Aley, Sam Parks, Chris Bankhead, Carl Nelitz and Richard Johnson. Second Row: Emil Bolduc, Mrs. Bramlet, Mr. Hess, Gloria Johnson, Lily Nelitz, Victoria Karpinski, Ivy Aley, Iona Gilmour, Mike Dragometz, John Karpinski, John Ewanchuk, Wally Nelitz, Ernest Nelitz. Third Row: Nettie Ewanchuk, Leona Gilmour, Erna Bankhead, Carl Gilmour, Floyd Gilmour, Elmer Bankhead, John Bramlet, John Johnson, Ann Archibald, Edgar Nelitz, Ruth Johnson, Mrs. Nelitz, Leona Bankhead and Lonnie Bankhead. Fourth Row: Eunice Johnson, Bonnie Ewanchuk, Beulah Bankhead, Barbara Karpinski, Eleanor Archibald and Lyle Bankhead. Front Row: ? Bolduc, Allen Archibald, Alex Ewanchuk, Bert Moss, ? Archibald, Leonard Gilmour, L. Bankhead.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

by Allen H. Archibald

The first Jehovah Witness service was held in 1929 in my father's General Store at Belloy. A transcription machine was used and the speaker on that occasion was the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the late J.F. Rutherford. At that time Belloy and Wanham were lesser known "flag" stations situated just north of the better known "Grizzly Bear Prairie" through which the old Grouard Trail passed. To designate where the oldtime residents lived in this "prairie" it was divided into the "Eastend" now (Belloy area) and the "Westend" (now the Wanham vicinity). From that 1929 meeting thereafter a number of visiting ministers were sent in, on the average of perhaps one a year. Nothing of a permanent nature was established then.

It is rather difficult to pinpoint "who" brought the movement into Wanham and area, because a number of persons had had contact with Jehovah's Witnesses to a greater or lesser degree. For example, one of the old-timers, presently residing in Wanham, told me that he had personally heard Russell (the first president of Watch



The Dedication Service at the new Bethel Chapel - 1977.

Tower Society) speak at an auditorium in Chicago in 1913. He recalled the subject of the sermon on how the Bible chronology pointed up the year 1914 A.D. as a marked year in which such things as a world conflagration were foretold to occur. This oldtime resident then went on to tell me how he had forgotten about this sermon until after he had moved to the Grizzly Bear Prairie and then it forcefully came home to him one day when he got his newspaper from the "Westend" post office (then operated by the well-known Pete Tansum, now deceased). His attention was arrested by the bold headline, "Nations engulfed in world conflagration."

Other persons, such as my father, had known of Jehovah's Witnesses long before coming to homestead in the Grizzly Bear Prairie in 1920. His mother had first been contacted in the Olds, Alberta area shortly after their arrival from the east in 1907. A devout Presbyterian formerly, she accepted Russell's explanations of the Bible and became an active member of Jehovah's Witnesses. My father was well acquainted with these Bible teachings but did not pursue them in his younger years. Rather, he followed through his Normal School education and taught in several areas of the Peace River country during the early years. One of the first schools that he taught in was the old "Westend" school just recently removed. It was a little old peaked roof building situated just south of the present school in Wanham. I have very definite recollections of those years as a child when my parents resided on their homestead about 3 miles southwest of that school.

A few years passed and my father eventually became Principal of the Spirit River school, a position which he held for many years. It was in 1929 he gave up teaching and built his General Store at Belloy, that year formally mentioned as the first time when a sermon was given by Jehovah's Witnesses in the area. However, it was not until 1939 that my father was ordained as a minister of Jehovah's Witnesses, and it can be said that at that time the first permanent organization of Jehovah's Witnesses was established in the area, with my father as the presiding minister. The small group did not have any permanent meeting place at the time, but met in private homes.

In 1944, regular services were first held in a rented farmhouse owned at the time by Mr. Sveinungaard, just four and one-half miles east of Wanham (the original Dave Bolduc Jr. homestead). At that time as many as fifty local residents associated together at regular weekly meetings. It was from this congregational arrangement that the present congregation now located in Wanham came.

I do not recall the exact year that the present Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses was erected in Wanham, as we moved to the Manning area. I believe it was quite early in the 1950's.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE WANHAM AREA

by Lily Sather

Although Lutheran services had been held in the

district for some time, the "Bethel" Lutheran Congregation was formally organized on November 24, 1946, by the Reverend Martin Knudson. The meeting was held at the Anton Rye home in Peoria. Officers elected were as follows: Vice President - Marius Olsen; Secretary-Treasurer - Halvor Hegna; Trustees: Peter Myrland, 1 year; Anton Rye, 2 years; Mrs. Alfred Amundson, 3 years.

Services were sporadic in the beginning, being controlled to a great extent by distance, weather, road conditions and transportation.

Familiar names of those serving here in the early years included: Ellingson, Lindquist, Evenson and others followed by Reverend K. Knutson, Reverend Nordmark, Reverend M. Knutson, Reverend E. Haave, Reverend D. Hanson, Reverend M. Rude, Reverend G. Grant, Reverend D. Bergeland, Reverend Anfinson and Reverend H. Severtson.

Reverend Nordmark, together with his wife and family, spent 2 weeks of his holidays one year holding the first Lutheran Daily Vacation Bible School here.

Services were held from home to home and later Mr. and Mrs. Rye opened their home for this purpose for several years. Then the group met in Wanham Church, Bethel Chapel, the use of which was offered by that congregation. A small yearly rental was paid for this privilege.

Reverend G. Grant, together with Mrs. G.R. Johnson, of LaGlace helped with formation of a Women's Missionary Federation here in October, 1958. There were 11 charter members.

Then, as members began to move to other centres and some had passed away, it was decided under these circumstances it would be necessary to disband and this took place on September 24, 1967.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OUR MOTTO: FOR GOD AND CANADA

The members of the Wanham Catholic Women's League, as well as the Catholic Congregation, welcome you to our community and hope you may find happiness and new friendships here. First let us express the sincere feeling that we are proud to be part of such a progressive community. That is the main reason why we would like you to know a little about our organization.

The C.W.L. is part of a Christian women's organization which is national in character and has over 107,000 members making up over 6,000 councils across Canada.

Nationally it was given existence, very humbly, by a group of housewives and mothers who wanted to dedicate their services and talents to God, their community and their country. They met and organized into a small group on June 17, 1920. Eventually it was incorporated as a national organization in 1923. Locally it was installed by the much dedicated late Mrs. Francis Pronovost of Grande Prairie in 1941.

Our director of this year, 1978, is Father Henryk Laciak who had the single honour of having been our

new Pope's student at the Seminary in Poland. That is the main reason why our pastor attended Pope John Paul II's coronation. We are very proud to share in a small humble way Father Laciak's honour as his parishioners.

The Catholic Women's League is a Christian organization whose objectives are to promote the ideals of Christian womanhood first in the home, then in the community and in the Canadian society to which it devotes its efforts. It is not a money raising organization per se but due to the pioneer era in which it finds itself, it resigns it's role to fund raising whenever it deems it necessary in order to carry on.

The aim of the C.W.L., approved by Pope Pius X himself, is to make every Christian woman a member ... non Catholic mothers and wives and singles are welcome to join as associate members.

One of our pressing objectives is to uphold and defend the values of Christian education, and the right to life - even before birth. Many resolutions are sent every year to our government concerning all social injustices and prejudices.

The C.W.L. sincerely tries to live up to its Motto.
We welcome you.

Mrs. A Prevost - President

DECEMBER 29, 1938

MIDNIGHT MASS CELEBRATED AT WANHAM FOR FIRST TIME

Midnight Mass was celebrated in Wanham for the first time on Christmas Eve, Rev. Father Vallerier being the celebrant. The church was very nicely decorated by the Ladies, who also erected the Crib. The altar was very nicely decorated and was brilliantly lit with tapers.

Great credit is also due to all those who donated material and labor in finishing up the front of the church and also building the choir loft and it is hoped that with a good crop next year that the inside of the church will be finished, as if the amount of work which was done this year can be done without a crop, it will not be hard to do alot more with a good crop in the district.

Service opened with the singing of that beautiful hymn, "O Holy Night", the first verse as a solo by E.J. Harrington and the second verse a duet by Mrs. Onagh Hoeght and E.J. Harrington, with the full choir taking the choruses.

The choir then rendered St. Basil's Mass with Mrs. Onaugh Hoeght and E.J. Harrington taking the solo parts. During Mass, the following hymns were sung: "Silent Night, Holy Night" as a duet by Mr. and Mrs. L.W. Hoeght, "Sleep Holy Babe" as a trio by Mr. and Mrs. Hoeght and E.J. Harrington, "Adestes Fideles" by the choir with the solo parts sung by Mrs. Hoeght and E.J. Harrington.

Immediately after High Mass, a Low Mass was said and the choir rendered the following hymns: The First Noel, What Lovely Infant, and Angels We Have Heard On High.

Mrs. R. Cameron, who, while not a member of the congregation, volunteered her services as organist, and

this was very much appreciated by Father Vallerier and the members of the choir.

E.H. Prevost also assisted greatly in special parts of the Mass and hymns as a violinist.

While the church was comfortably filled, there would no doubt have been a lot more present had it not been for the storm which swept over the district on Saturday afternoon and evening.

Rev. Father Vallerier left immediately after the service for Spirit River, where he celebrated High Mass on Sunday morning.



St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church - 1936. Left to Right: Yvonne Prevost, Gabrielle Prevost, Aurore Prevost, Ed Prevost, Ozanne Prevost, Margaret Pronovost, John Pronovost, Dora Doyle, Albert Leriger, Mr. Harvey Sheedy. Children: Kazimira and Frances Jakubowski.

ST. PATRICK'S LADIES OF THE ALTAR WANHAM, ALBERTA

The first mention of a club to be organized from the Catholic ladies appears in the following minutes:

FALL 1930

A meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Octavie Prevost. Seven ladies were present: Mrs. Octavie Prevost, Mrs. J.J. Harrington, Mrs. Luceine Leriger, Mrs. Baduik, Mrs. Fred Murphy, Miss Pickup.

These ladies became the first members. It was decided we call the club "Ladies of the Altar."

The aims and purpose of the club was to work for the church and help those in need in the community, to promote the welfare and love of God and happiness of our neighbors.

From then on, as years went by, the club grew and we contacted all Catholic ladies of the community. New members that joined from year to year were: Mrs. Ed. Harrington, Mrs. Yvonne Prevost, Mrs. Molly Tansem, Mrs. M. Laughy, Mrs. Frances Metz, Mrs. J. Edey, Mrs. L. Hoight, Mrs. Lillian Anderson.

Our funds were raised by having bake sales and bazaars, raffles, serving lunches at hockey games and at dances, making quilts to be raffled.



Father Thomas and Altar Boys - 1954. At Top: Father Thomas. Second Row: Harvey Laughy and Harvey Prevost. Third Row: Billy Waters and Paul Leriger. Fourth Row: Doug Laughy and Brett Leriger. Front Row: Paul Prevost and Ray Waters.



St. Patrick's Church - 1955. Left to Right: Brett Leriger, Doug Laughy, Wayne Metz, Paul Prevost, Joan Zmean, Adelaide Zmean. In Front: Emily Boisvert.

Reading in the past minutes, Mrs. J. Harrington moved we charge 25¢ for a whist card party and a dance after was 50¢ per person. The orchestra was volunteers: Ed Prevost, Louise Hight, Leo Prevost, Octave Prevost, Art Tansum. A good time was reported by all. Hall rent was \$3.60.

The meetings were held in different homes. In the year 1939, a Halloween dance was held at the hall. Ozan Prevost and Miss Misunis did the decorating. The club bought orange and black paper. They had cats, witches, goblins, skeletons and streamers. It was beautifully done. The funds were spent on benches, paint, varnish and heat for the church, etc.

In the fall of 1940, the Ladies of the Altar was organized and was now called St. Patrick's C.W.L. It was organized by the diocesan president, Mrs. Frances Pronovost and diocesan director, Father Crean, both from Grande Prairie.

The club had 10 members. Elected were the following ladies: Director, Father Paquin; president, Ozan Prevost; vice president, Aurore Prevost; secretary, Mrs. Budney.

The motto of the C.W.L. is to work for God and Canada, faith and service to God.

Again our monthly meetings were held at the different homes.

Our membership grew as years went by. We all took turns at being president, secretary and treasurer.

These were some of our members: Mrs. Aurore Prevost, Mrs. Frank Newland, Mrs. Betty Freedel, Mrs. A. Zmean, Mrs. Manson, Mrs. Olga Podruzny, Mrs. Grace Podruzny, Mrs. Gertie Metz, Mrs. Agnes Boisvert, Mrs. Cecile Lane, Mrs. Steve Howard, Mrs. Vera Johnson, Miss Stacey Misunis, Mrs. Ozan McSweeny, (Ozan Prevost), Mrs. Morrell, Mrs. A. Oulette, Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Jim Howard, Mrs. D. Heitrich, Mrs. Helen McCormick, Mrs. A. Meyers, Mrs. J. Lebeuf, Mrs. Audrey Laughy.

In the year 1956, Mrs. Adelaide Zmean was elected diocesan president and Father H. Thomas diocesan director.

Ways and means for our funds to date are bake sales.

We don't have the responsibility of raising funds for the upkeep of the church now. It's to help home missions in Canada, scholarships, etc.

The C.W.L. are quite active in the community projects. We feel in this community there is always work for willing hands.

The motto of the C.W.L. is for God and Canada.

Our crest is the cross surmounting 10 maple leaves; the cross and the maple leaves being enclosed in an unbroken circle. The cross is the symbol of our redemption, of our Divine Savior who died for truth and mercy and justice. The maple leaves, one for each province, are symbolic of Canada. The circle testifies as endless chain of service with foundation on a basis of mutual charity.

The league colors are blue and gold in honor of our Patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

The purpose of the league shall be to unite Catholic women of our country in a band of fellowship and interest in social and patriotic work for God and Canada.



Roman Catholic Pilgrimage at Girouxville in the late '40s. Father Michalowski in the centre. Congregation includes Mr. and Mrs. Walter Pawluski, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Popik, John and Pauline Pierog and Mr. and Mrs. Gardeski.

HISTORY OF ST. PATRICKS CHURCH - WANHAM

by Aurore Prevost

1936 - Where the church now stands, the land was donated by Ed. J. Harrington. In the spring of 1937 the new church was being erected on the site. Lumber, cement, windows, doors, bricks, etc., were donated by local parishioners. There was Ed. Prevost, Octave Prevost, Al Fortier, Joe Myers, Laurence Leriger, Mrs. Octavie Prevost, Ed. Harrington and others.

1937 - Mr. Rutherford was hired as foreman and it was erected in a couple of months. The first Priest that held mass here would come from Spirit River and Rycroft. There was Father Demerse, Father Valarier, Father Paquin.

1951 - In that year we were very fortunate in obtaining a residing Priest for Wanham. Father Ritcher, a young man just out of seminary, came to us. He and brother Allie erected a 16' X 22' rectory attached to the back of the church. This was a great asset to our parish. New seats were put in and the church was painted. Father Ritcher was here for one year.

1953 - Then came Father Thomas. That year the inside of the church had to be remodeled, an arched ceiling, an insulating wall and a furnace room built. A propane furnace was installed. Noel Boivert, A. Leriger, A. Prevost, Ed Prevost, the Podruzny brothers were a big help. Trees and lawn grass were planted. The bell tower and front entrance was built.

1958 - A garage was donated by Howard Zmean which added to the property of the church.

1958 - Father Thomas was posted in Trenton, Ontario as air force chaplain. Father Marceau replaced him.

1960 - Then came Father Rouelle.

1963 - Then Father Prowx.

1976- Father Debuc.

1978 - Father Lasiek, a young chap from Poland, came here two years ago to see Canada.

This year we've installed a new furnace and rugged the back which is used for a meeting room and coffee chat after mass. Mrs. Joan LeBeuf is our organist. The whole parish sings the mass.

CHURCH HISTORY OF KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN WANHAM

At the request of Mr. H. McFayden of Heart Valley, the Rev. E.A. Wright of Grande Prairie held services in the Community Hall in Wanham and in Heart Valley once a month; but it was in July 1933 that a Presbyterian Deaconess, Miss M. Grigor, was appointed to the field. She began Sunday School with six children which increased to thirty-five. After Sunday School Miss Grigor held a service and this was continued every Sunday morning. Other points were added, namely Heart Valley, West Vale, Prestville, Belloy and Fox Creek, where services were held at each place.



Mrs. Ledingham and Miss Grigor in front of Grande Prairie Presbyterian Church.



Rev. Clow and Shirley Trump.



Rev. and Mrs. Hancock and children Brenda, Joyce and Norman Dale.

Every Wednesday night we prayed for a small building as the Hall was bitterly cold in the winter. Later we received word through the Women's Missionary Society (W.M.S.) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada that a legacy had been left for the pioneer work of the church and that Wanham would receive \$550.00. Here was an answer to our prayers! With this amount of money it was decided to build a church. Members and friends of the church gave donations and it was a great day when we opened and dedicated Knox Presbyterian Church on the 14th day of October, 1934. Rev. E. Wright took this service. It was believed the church cost around \$1200.00.

An affiliated group of the Women's Missionary Society was organized in the fall of 1933 with Mrs. George MacDonald as president and Mrs. E.W. Trump as secretary treasurer. It was not a large group in those days but they helped their local church in many ways and also gave generously to the W.M.S.

Miss Grigor was our only resident deaconess who was here for five years. She worked very hard, made many visitations with horse and buggy in summer, and horse and cutter in winter. She conducted funerals; and organized Mission Bands which were held every other week in schoolhouses.

Rev. W. L. Anderson was appointed minister in 1937 and Mr. Clow (a student minister) in 1938 for six months; Followed by Rev. Alex MacSween for three years; Rev. A.R. Hancock succeeded him until 1943, when Mr. Hutchinson then took over from him.



Miss Grigor in her "Bennett Buggy" in front of the Baker-Lampert place which was used as the manse during her stay in Wanham.



Hazel Trump at the console of the little folding organ that Miss Grigor took with her to services. This picture was taken at the Burnt River Presbyterian Campsite.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MINISTERS AND DEACONESS'S

Rev. Wright

Deaconess M. Grigor
Ledingham

Rev. Clow
Atkinson
McSween
Hancock
Hutchinson
Evans
Sims
Wakelin
Williams
Grove
Moore
Miller
Campbell
King
Mark
Kinsler

Innis
Riseborough

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND UNITED CHURCH

by Jean Ramsfield

Prior to the coming of the Presbyterian Church, the area was served for a number of years by the United Church of Canada. It was financed by the Board of Home Missions of the United Church who supplied a student for the summer months. In winter the minister from Spirit River came about once a month or more often when he could manage it. These included Rev. Arthur Thorpe and Rev. Casmore. Services were held in the hall located then on Pete Tansem's quarter below the hill and they continued to be held there until the summer of 1935. To the best of my knowledge the United Church stopped sending students then as the Presbyterian Church had been opened in 1934 and it was felt the district could not easily support two similar denominations.

It was about 1933 (or 1932-1933 winter) probably that the first Presbyterian services were held in Wanham and the man who held them was Rev. Wright and he came from Grande Prairie. I think the MacDonalds, Munros and McFaddens of Heart Valley encouraged him as they were really Presbyterians but had attended the United Church services. At this time the area was still being served, as I have mentioned, by the United Church and some very fine students and preachers they were. It was Wright who was behind the move to send in a deaconess and so Miss Grigor came and started a Sunday School and also held services at Prestville and Heart Valley. She remained there until after the church was built and the first minister arrived.

Miss Grigor was a most dedicated woman. She lived



Left to Right: Mrs. Moore, Doris Tansem and Rev. Dick Moore.

for the church. For one or two winters, 1933-1934 that I am sure of, she contracted with the Ramsfield boys to drive her out to her various charges and some very cold drives they were. She was a small, dark, wiry woman and seemed to stand the travel and cold without any problems. She had a small folding organ which she took with her to services and so was able to brighten the services.

I remember well, as an example of her steadfastness to her church, one bitterly cold Sunday when Art had refused to take the horse out on the long drive for fear of them suffering lung damage. Miss Grigor was so determined to go that she started to walk that long distance. It was a foolhardy undertaking since no one was on the roads and it was many miles to the nearest house to the south. I was living at home at the time and I recall we saw her hiking past our house. She had walked about a mile when she realized her mistake, turned back and was glad to come in from the cold for a hot drink and warm up before going back to Wanham.



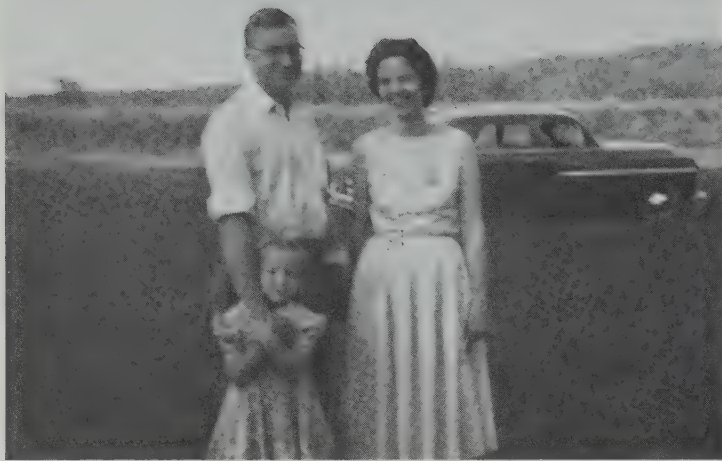
Miss Melafonte and Leah Robinson.

Now a bit about the young United Church student ministers who served the area. There was a young man, who's name we have forgotten, the first year we came (the Camerons) to Wanham in the summer of 1929. We think he may have stayed at the Duncan Cameron's as the little manse was not built then. It may have been built shortly thereafter and Art and my dad worked on it and there was other volunteer help. We think the United Church may have supplied money for lumber. It is the little house the church board rented to some of the teachers in winter when it was not in use by the student ministers. The Lamperts and McTavish's lived in it. It was on my Uncle Rance's quarter.

In 1930 Irwin Hilliard was the student. He was only 19 years old but was quite good and started a Sunday School in the hall below the hill. This is also where the services were held although the previous summer they were in the old school on top of the hill also on Uncle Rance's (the old Duncan Cameron) place. Irwin persuaded me to help in the Sunday School and to play the piano for the hymns. Irwin Hilliard planned to become a medical missionary on completion of his theology training (his sister was the well-known Dr. Marion Hilliard who wrote medical articles that were published in *Chatelaine* and other periodicals) but became instead a Professor at the University of Saskatchewan. He had a doctorate also. Irwin was anxious to start a Ladies Aide but this became instead the wanham Progressive Club since it was felt that a church group might leave out some women of other denominations who might like to attend and the need was there for a charity group in those depression days. However, a few years later, a Ladies Aide was formed (during Charlie Kitney's stay) and members included Mrs. P. Tansem, Mrs. Roy Cameron, Mrs. Pickard (Ralph's mother), Mrs. Hauser, Vera Tansem, Mrs. Sawers, and myself that I know of.

In 1931 Ken Woodward was the minister and in 1932 it was Harvey Inglis. Harvey Inglis was ordained and later went to the Hay River District.

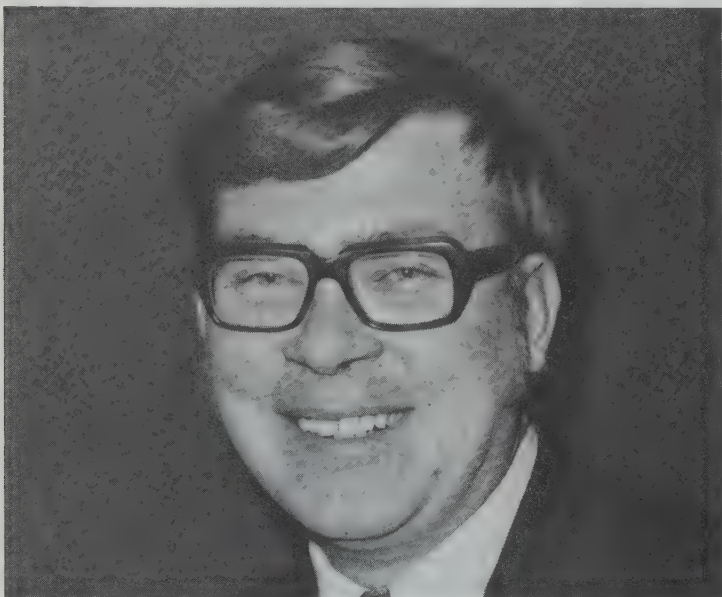
In 1933 Charlie Kitney was the student sent into Wanham by the United Church. He enjoyed the north and his work so much that he remained until 1935. At that time he returned to Toronto and with him went his fiancée, Elaine Sellars. She was the teacher at West Vale.



Rev. Don and Mary Campbell with daughter Margaret at a farewell at the Burnt, July 1960.

She attended Women's college for training in church work. After Charlie was ordained they were married and went to the missions in Trinidad where they stayed for many years.

During his time in Wanham, Charlie Kitney took a real interest in everything and held services in Heart Valley, West Vale and Fox Creek as well. He and Miss Grigor worked out an amiable agreement so there was no conflict or overlapping of services. He had his own team of horses and often rode to his charges. He was very interested in music and played the clarinet well. He started the United Church choir with my mother as pianist and director. We met at Tansems and at my mothers for practice. Some of the members were Harry, Onagh, Louis, Vera, Gladys, Arne, Art and myself. It became a most pleasant social evening to which we all looked forward. Sometimes Pete Tansem would get out his violin and Ed Prevost would bring his and it was really good fun. A number of the Catholics there went to



Rev. Ken Innes - 1974.

hear Charlie preach among them Mrs. J.J. Harrington. At that time there was no Catholic Church but a priest came in occasionally. Charlie stayed with Art the last winter after the boys left for B.C. with their dad.

ERNEST PLAYDON FAMILY

by Mrs. Playdon

My husband, Ernest Playdon was transferred from Grande Prairie as section foreman to Wanham. We arrived November 11, 1932, in a charming little place surrounded by tall pines and found the people of this wee town kind and friendly.

We had four children when we came to Wanham and found to our amazement there was no Protestant Church. Being Christian and Protestant we were anxious that our children continue going to Sunday School so we started Sunday School for our children in the section house.

In a very short time we had quite a gathering of children, the neighbours happy to have their children learn the good news of the Gospel of our Lord. We had many visitors from the different churches, among them was our friend the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Grande Prairie, his name escapes me, who used to come once a month and hold services in different homes. It was he who suggested a church for the people and children of Wanham, this was in the spring of 1933. In the summer of 1934, I had a visitor from West Vancouver who said she was a Deaconess of the Presbyterian Church and was anxious to begin church work in Wanham. She inquired about the Sunday School in the section house and we decided that afternoon that she should take over the children and we, together, should have Sunday School in the Wanham Hall where there would be room for more children. In a short time numbers increased.

Children were the first congregation of the Wanham Presbyterian Church. Deaconess Miss Grigor was our first minister. She rented the little house in the pines. There she held prayer meetings every Wednesday night where prayer was made to God to grant our request for a church where people and children could worship and praise God.

Miss Grigor drove her horse and buggy many miles visiting farmers way out to West Vale and Heart Valley, preaching and getting many people interested in a church building and was used of God to influence them to help build and finance it.

I am not positive of the date, but it could have been 1934-1935, our church records will have correct dates when the building of our Wanham Church began, and because many people from Wanham and districts had a mind to donate time, material, money and hard work, the building was completed. We took such pride in our little Church, thanking God for granting our request. All who came to the opening service felt rewarded for the effort everyone put forth to complete such a fine place of worship. I thank God for the Wanham Presbyterian Church and its ministers who taught my children to memorize the scriptures and now their children attend Nelson Presbyterian Church.



Left to Right: Rev. Hancock, Hazel Trump, Mrs. Playdon, Mrs. MacDonald, Mrs. Lampert and Mrs. Pickard.

The church was built, the Gospel preached, the poor and sick visited and often clothed by the wonderful quilts, baby clothes and scores of pairs of mitts and socks made by the ladies of the Presbyterian Church east as far as Toronto and west to Vancouver. May God continue to bless and use her to the extension of His Kingdom.

NOVEMBER 26, 1936

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HOLDS ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Presbyterian Church of the Wanham District celebrated the second anniversary of the opening of their church on Sunday, Nov. 8, by special services. The missionary in charge, Rev. W.R. Atkinson, conducted public worship at 11 am and 8 pm. He was assisted by the deaconess, Miss Grigor. The choir rendered a special musical program, in which they were assisted by local talent. Good congregations were present, especially at the morning service.

On Monday evening the Ladies Association served a chicken supper at the home of the deaconess and a large number of people in the community sat down to a most delightful repast.

The company adjourned to the church where an excellent program was rendered by the choir and other talent. Everybody attending reports a most enjoyable evening and are asking when the next supper will be given by the ladies of the church.

The event has heartened the congregation and friends of the cause in Wanham. Financial returns were very gratifying.

HISTORICAL ITEMS TAKEN FROM THE ANNUAL REPORTS FOR THE YEARS 1964 TO MAY, 1969. WANHAM AND BELLOY

by Rev. Harold W. Grove

On May 21, 1964, I was recognized into the pastoral



Rev. Donna Riseborough

The Reverend Donna J. Riseborough came to Wanham on May 31, 1976. Previously, her home was in the Southwestern Ontario countryside between Durham and Mount Forest. In that area she had attended public school in a one-room rural school, called S.S. No. 3, "Gleneden", Normanby Township, and high school at Mount Forest. She mostly taught school until her late twenties, when she decided to study for the ministry. She took her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Guelph and the Master of Divinity degree at Knox College in the University of Toronto. She was ordained to the holy ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Canada at Acton, Ontario, on May 9, 1976.

charge of Belloy, Wanham, Blueberry Mountain and Silver Valley at Munro Presbyterian Church, Blueberry Mountain by the Presbytery of Peace River. By action of the Presbytery in February, 1968, the Munro Presbyterian Church and Silver Valley were taken off my pastoral charge and Brownvale and Dixonville charge became part of the Belloy and Wanham field effective March 1, 1968. Harold W. Grove's last service on the Belloy, Wanham, Brownvale and Dixonville field was Sunday, May 26, 1969. At this time, I left to enter University in Toronto and graduated in May, 1970, with a Librarian degree (two year course covered in one year). In October, 1970, I was inducted into the Indian Head - Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan charge where I am still Minister. (January, 1975).

The coin box, I believe, came with the Heart Valley Church.

The Heart Valley Church building was moved into Wanham in 1965. It was set on a large beam and blocks for sometime. In 1966 the cement foundation was laid and the building joined to the present church building. The center portion was planned to be used as a kitchen, utility room, etc. The Church Hall was used for all congregational purposes, also the Belloy Birch Hills Junior Forest Wardens used the Hall as a meeting place.

We do not know about the bell in the church. It sort of runs in our mind that someone in Wanham told us that the bell in the church in Wanham was an old fire bell from Grande Prairie but this we do not know for sure.

Mrs. Mary Sather may be able to give you some light on the bell, I don't know for sure.

The two collection plate stands originally came from the Heart Valley Church as they were the railing posts at the front of the church and I saved them and varnished them to be used in the Wanham Church.

On December 18, 1966, a new electric organ was given to Knox Presbyterian Church, Wanham, from a friend of the Rev. and Mrs. H.W. Grove. An engraved plaque with the words "Donated by Miss Myrtle A. McKenzie, Vancouver, 1966" was placed on the organ. The history of this is when Miss McKenzie learned that the C.G.I.T. group were trying to raise funds to purchase an organ, she desired to purchase the organ outright approximately \$1,000.00 and the C.G.I.T. group use their funds for improving the local Church. The C.G.I.T. then purchased the five groups of four's light fixtures and Mr. Harry Beamer did the installation work. The C.G.I.T. also purchased the rubber matting from the back to the front of the Church for the aisle. On July 19, 1968, the C.G.I.T. group paid for the paint and paid Mr. Fowler for painting the exterior of the Church building and the manse (\$311.15).

In October, 1967, the Belloy Sunday School children presented a silver offering plate as a 1967 centennial project to the Belloy Church with engraving thereon.

During the years of my service we had formed two groups of children's work at Belloy every Friday after school; two groups of children's work at Wanham (Mrs. F. Sather, Explorers and I had the C.O.C.'s) a very active C.G.I.T. group of girls in Wanham and Blueberry Mt. My outside activities were pastor of the Belloy and Wanham Legion, officer with Fairview Air Cadets, supervisor of Junior Forest Wardens.

IMPRESSIONS OF WANHAM

by Gary Coy

"Wanham, where's that?"

"It's Wanham, W-A-N-H-A-M! It's in the Peace River country. God's country" she added. "Do you know where Grande Prairie is?"

"Sort of", I replied noncommittally.

"What about Spirit River then?"

"Oh yeah, I've heard of that place. A friend of mine and his wife moved up there this spring, but I haven't visited them yet. Isn't it way up north somewhere?"

"Yes, it's north" said Joan, "but it's only about 300 miles and anyway I've got an idea that could kill two birds with one stone!"

"And what might that be?" I asked, wondering about her choice of metaphor.

"We could drive up this Thanksgiving weekend, visit your friends, and you could meet my parents!"

"Your parents?" I said weakly. I'd heard a lot about Joan's parents, since meeting her that spring. She quite obviously cared about them a great deal and was anxious that I should get to know them myself. Suddenly her mother and father loomed very large in my mind and I was struck by a feeling of irrational fear. Would they accept me, city-born and bred? Somebody who didn't

know a harrow from a disc, and called everything with horns a cow? Would I pass muster where others had failed, (a subject of much apparent amusement to Joan, who had described in humorous terms the rigorous inspections accorded my predecessors!)

"I know you'll like them, and I think they will like you, too" she added, with a smile.

"Alright" I said, "In for a penny, in for a pound; let's leave early on Saturday".

"You know, the closer we get to Wanham, the slower you're going" said Joan.

"It's a beautiful fall day, and anyway we'll be there in good time." I argued defensively. Was I really going more slowly now than before we started out, I thought?

'WANHAM 30 miles,' the sign had said as we crested the Watino hill. What would Wanham be like? I pictured it to be just like the dozens of other small towns we had driven by or passed through that day; a few houses, a gas station, a dilapidated general store, with the reminders of a bygone era rusting quietly in the tall grass that was now brown and withered by early frosts. So many of these small towns had a look of desolation about them and it was difficult to imagine that they had once been thriving communities, the centres of many hopes and aspirations. I was jerked from this reverie by Joan's voice. "There's a gravel road straight to the farm just at the corner there," said Joan, "but I think you should continue up to the Wanham corner so you can see the town itself." "We can see who's in town" said Joan's sister Pat, who had travelled up with us and was sitting in the back.

A white-painted plough, suspended by chains above a neatly trimmed rock garden, sported a sign that proclaimed: 'COCO welcomes you to WANHAM.'

COCO? I thought. The patron saint of clowns? What manner of town was this? We drove down the main street past well-kept gardens and freshly painted houses; there is no air of dejection here, I thought to myself.

"What does COCO mean?" I asked.

"It means, Community of Cooperating Organizations," said Joan, "but you'll get a better idea of what it means if you talk to the people who live here."

The idea intrigued me, cooperative effort eh?

"Oh look Joan, Nick and Harold are in town, I wonder if Mom and Dad are?" exclaimed Pat.

"I don't see anybody but those children over there in front of that house," I protested, "and who are Nick and Harold?" I asked.

"They're friends of Mom and Dad," laughed Joan, "but it's their trucks we can see, not them."

"You know everybody by their vehicles?" I said.

"Sure", said Joan, "and before too long, that's how everybody here will know you, by this old brown Volvo." Interesting concept, I thought, and mentally filed it away.

We had crossed the railway tracks north of the town, and now as we accelerated down the road, twin plumes of dust billowed out behind the car like smoke from some iron horse of earlier times.

"That's Podruzny's there" said Joan. "Now bear right at the corner by Laughys and we'll pass Nick's place

further down. It's only another couple of miles to the farm!" she said excitedly.

My heart began to beat a little faster, and it wasn't just the dust that was making my mouth dry! It was too late now to stop and suggest another break, maybe a tire would go flat!

The gravel scrunched under the tires, as I pulled the car to a halt outside the house. I shut the motor off and for a brief moment took in the pastoral scene around me. Several brightly painted implements were gathered together in some semblance of order at the far end of the yard, whilst nearby a Case tractor stood idle, its exhaust stack shimmering with heat that betrayed its use.

"Come on", said Joan, "You can look around after."

This was it I thought, and jumped out of the car.

"Hello there, young fella, how was the road up?" said Howard. It was a greeting I was to hear many times in the years to come, and had a ring of downright friendliness to it, a sort of 'take-your-shoes-off and make-yourself-at-home feeling. I liked him immediately.

"Garry, this is my mother; Mom, this is Garry", said Joan.

"Hello Garry, would you kids like something to eat, some coffee?", said Adelaide.

Just like that! I thought; no fuss or unnecessary awkwardness, just put your feet under the table and be yourself. "Yes, please" I said, and sat down at the big kitchen table.

The look in her mother's eyes had said it all. I got the impression that she could see through me clear to the next county, but it didn't matter. In this house you were part of the family.

In the hubub and excitement of the girls coming home and wanting to tell, and be told, everything that was new since they were last home, I had time to take note of the lack of formality between the girls and their parents. Instead, there was a warm feeling in that kitchen that made the T.V. program 'Family' look like 'Pomp and Circumstance.' Even Rufus the family dog joined in, barking excitedly until he was unceremoniously ushered out to his domain.

The weekend passed quickly, too quickly. On the Sunday we had all piled into the pickup and had toured the 'emporium', as Howard fondly referred to the farm.

"The Z Spread," countered Marga and Gwen, Joan's youngest sisters.

Since I didn't know barley from wheat or anything else about farming for that matter, it was an eye-opening experience for me. It was unlike what I had expected. The whole family was interested in what was growing where, and how it was doing, and when it would be ready to harvest. There was talk of summerfallow, double harrowing versus single harrowing, the merits of fall ploughing, estimates of weeds, and ways to control them. There were varieties of wheat to ponder over, discussions about what had been grown on a particular field in the past and how that crop may have influenced this year's, and what should be done to that field in the future. By the time we returned to the house, my head was swimming in a sea of new information, most of it mixed up! There were a lot of questions, but the one thing that stood out in my mind was the feeling of vitality that the

whole family seemed to be experiencing. Where were the signs of a decaying way of life, that was so often imagined by the hardened city-dweller? Why was I feeling that here the real pulse of life could be felt? I would have plenty of time to mull over that question in the years to come, but I knew then that that it was the people, not just the place, that made the difference between existing and living. The family farm was a place to grow!

Was this family unique in its attitude to life? Had I travelled 300 miles to an isolated bright spot in the everyday fight for existence? I came to learn that the Zmean family, although unique in their own way, were part of a much larger family, a family of friends, neighbors and fellow human beings.

I wouldn't wish to give the impression that the people of Wanham and surrounding area are always living in the spirit of carnival, or that never a mean exchange of words takes place, but I would wish to convey the feeling that they know how to build their lives together and around each other.

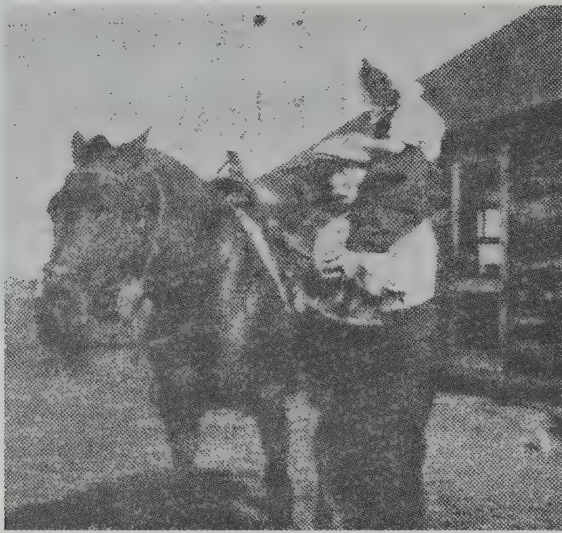
First impressions can sometimes be misleading, but it was with the passage of time that I became aware of just how strongly the people of Wanham are committed to the community and cooperative spirit. As an outsider, from a place where people seem to go out of their way to isolate themselves from others, it was with great pleasure that I observed the people of Wanham working together with enthusiasm for a common goal. When the day came that I was asked to help out at the annual ploughing match, I must admit to feeling a kind of acceptance that I had not experienced before.

The spirit of the people of Wanham is written in their actions towards their own families and the greater family of man, a family I am proud to be a part of.



Village of Wanham Today. Looking south to Highway 49.





1915 - Robert Gilmour, a pioneer of the Belloy district and his granddaughter Violet.



"Granny"
Gilmour.

BELLOY

by Vi Wilde

It was in 1917 that the first store and post office were built in what was then called Grizzly Bear Prairie.

There are many versions of why this name was adopted by the local residents. The one most often quoted is that a homesteader actually saw a grizzly in the area. Since these bears were, and still are, only seen in the far north, a sighting of one so far from its natural habitat was of unusual attention. Hence, the choice of the name for this tiny Hamlet.

Mr. Smith, a man from England, was the storekeeper and postmaster. He stayed until after the first war, then moved to Manitoba.

During Mr. Smith's years in Grizzly Bear, most of the settlers were from either the United States or Eastern Canada.

One can but wonder why they would come to a place where there was nothing but heavy bush, no roads, no railroads, nothing but wild animals, billions of blood sucking mosquitoes and black flies. But come they did, and many stayed to become prosperous farmers.

After the first war more came. But they had an incentive, as many returned men wanting to farm were given two quarters of land by what was then called The Soldier's Settlement Board.



Mrs. Ira Gilmour with 4 of the 36 coyotes that Ira bagged in 1 month.

It was due to this influx of settlers that Grizzly Bear began to grow. After Mr. Smith came the Ramsfields who, after a couple of years, burned out. Then came Ross and Maude Archibald who built a larger, more modern, building for their first store. The Post Office was run by the Babbs, a few miles south of the Hamlet, then it was moved to the Hamlet where the Bices took over.

After a number of years, Maude and Ross Archibald sold to the Harry Scotts in 1940. They continued in business until 1951, when they sold to Bill Lewis.

On October 19, 1963, fire destroyed not only the Lewis' Store, but their home. They did not rebuild, but bought the Fimrite Department Store in Wanham.

Long before this, though, Grizzly Bear had changed its name to Belloy.

No one seems to remember why the name Belloy was chosen. Some say it was named by a man from England, who enjoyed the singing of an opera singer by that name. Others say it was named after a surveyor by the name of Belloy. But for whatever reason, in the 1920's Grizzly Bear faded into the distance and Belloy became a bustling little Hamlet.



Mr. Gilmour Sr. - an early pioneer.



Ross and Maude Archibald and son Allen at their "Westend" Grizzly Bear Prairie homestead - 1920.



Ross Archibald and Allan Godby entertaining in homestead days - early 1920s. Taken beside Godby log cabin. The Godby homestead eventually became Dave Bolduc Jr. farmstead. It was later owned by Halvor Sveinungaard and then became the Sallis home. It was situated directly north of the Herman Thorin homestead in the middle of Grizzly Bear Prairie.

In the early thirties more and more settlers from the dried out prairies began to arrive. Naturally, with the influx of more and more people, more business sprang up.

Bertha Sveinungaard had a small store which she sold to Art Paline, who operated it a few years, then sold to Maude Archibald. Shortly afterward, this store burned after which Mrs. Archibald built a new, much larger, store. In 1949 Lee and Emma Phillips bought Maude Archibald out. Mrs. Rouleau had a nice cafe, which many of the oldtimers will tell you served the best meals they had ever eaten. Upon her retirement, she sold to Harvey Scott. He later sold to Dale Ferguson. Guy Lewis had a butcher shop, which he sold to Lloyd Fowler. Budd Dennis ran a jewellery and watch repair shop. Norman Berner ran a blacksmith shop. The Scott brothers had a Massey Ferguson Machine Agency, automoblie agency and garage. Bill Wortman had a John Deere agency. The Hamlet also boasted a pool hall.

The first elevator in Belloy had its first grain buyer, a Mr. Thew. He and his wife built the first elevator house in Belloy. The elevator burned two years later, but was soon rebuilt and Jack Culshaw became its first buyer. He was followed by Earl Stauffer, Percy Stevens, Bill

Cathcart, Elmer Larson, Bud Ireland, Gowen Moxley, S. Carter, Bill Sallis, Ralph Lowe, Mr. Kayding, Max Lancaster, James Culshaw, Ralph Bodette, and last of all, John Hawryluk. The elevator was closed in the early 70's. This building still stands as a mute reminder of the years that used to be.

As the hamlet grew, the necessity of a railroad station arose, and Rex Lampert was the first agent to occupy the small building. The McKrimmon Saw Mill, south of Belloy, was probably the biggest user of the railroad at that time. Of course, grain from the elevator had to be moved, and settlers moving in brought their possessions in by rail. One person tells of seeing box car loads of dead rabbits being moved to the mink farms around the Slave Lake country. I believe the homesteaders received 25¢ each for the rabbits.

Mr. Lampert was followed by Spud Schumard as agent. Then Art Fraser, Bob Geddes and Jack Le Brier.

Railroads have to be kept in repair, so a section house was built and the first section foreman to occupy the building was Bud Halverson. It seems the section changed foreman much more often than the railroad changed station agents, as I have been given many more names of section foremen including: Bud Halverson, Bill Ripley, Cecil Bice, John Kowalski, Ivan Pearson, Chris Knutson, and John Zawbloski.

In the early 50's a community hall and curling rink were built, all by volunteer labor! What wonderful times people had in those two buildings! People from near and far came to Belloy dances.

Anyone having lived in a small town knows how much effort it takes from many people to keep places like these running. No one person can do it alone, but it does take one special person to 'keep the ball rolling'. In Belloy that very special person was Nellie Scott.

The post office, once being part of the local store, was taken over by Jack and Margaret Culshaw in 1939, which they operated from their own home for 18 years.

In the 1940's the Steele School was moved from its location 3 1/2 miles south into the Hamlet of Belloy. It was in operation until centralization in 1956, when the school was closed and the pupils were bussed into Wanham - a sad event for the little Hamlet.



BELLOY GENERAL GARAGE

A. H. ARCHIBALD, Prop.

MACHINE SHOP and ACETYLENE
WELDING

Belloy, Alta., 194

SCOTT

SALES



BROS.

SERVICE

WELDING - LATHE WORK - REBORING

Belloy, Alta. Feb 1 194



Rod MacKrimmon Sawmill that operated in the Birch Hills 6 miles directly south of present day Belloy - early '20s.



The Scott Boys. At Back: Harvey. Front, Left to Right: Lawrence and Albert.



Ross Archibald loading and checking lumber for the MacKrimmon mill at the Belloy siding - early '20s.



The Scott Family. Left to Right: Albert, Allan, Nellie and Lawrence. (Pictures of Mr. Harry Scott appear elsewhere in this book.)



Ross and Maude Archibald in their first oat crop on homestead 3 miles southwest of present day Wanham (then known as the "Westend" of the Grizzly Bear Prairie).



Bunny Fortier home north of Belloy. This picture was not taken until 1952 but the Fortier family were early settlers in the Belloy area.





Belloy - Scott's store, flour shed and Massey-Harris agency.



Belloy - after 1948 - looking east. Left to Right: Elevator, station house, post office in the Culshaw home, store built by Maude Archibald - later sold to Lee and Emma Phillips, storage shed and garage.



Scott's Garage.



The Rouleau home and restaurant.



Belloy - 1945 - Scott's truck, Bankhead's car.



Mrs. Roleau

BELLOY POST OFFICE CLOSES 1915-1969, 54 YEARS

The Belloy Post Office was closed Thursday, July 31, 1969. It was opened in December of 1915 and had been a part of the community since.

W.A. Smith operated the first store on what was known as The Grizzly Bear Prairie. This prairie stretched from the Burnt River on the west to just east of Bill Aleys. Smith's store, which also housed the post office, was situated about 1/2 mile east of the present siding and on the north side of the tracks. It was operated by Smith until 1927. The post office was named at a gathering of the pioneers. Chris Bankhead's step-mother was the only woman at the meeting and so she was given the task of naming the new office. She aptly called it "Grizzly Bear" and this was the name it carried for some time. Later, when the railway arrived and the siding was moved to its present location, the name was changed to Belloy.

Succeeding postmaster's have been Jim Babbs. The post office was located on the Babb's homestead which is where William Wozniak now lives. A.W. Bice, father of Gordon Bice, was next postmaster and lived in Belloy proper. William Ripley followed. Jack and Margret Culshaw from 1939-1957. J. Jack Laughland from 1957-1962. Annie Urness was postmistress from June, 1962 to January, 1966. Fred Warren was the last postmaster at its closing.

Since the founding, a half a century ago, Belloy has had a terrific community spirit. The Belloy Baseball Team, with its supply of Urness boys, was a dandy. The sports days held for many years south of the Old Steele School site were real family gatherings and were looked forward to each year by the whole district. In 1933, the Scotts moved into Belloy. They homesteaded and later took over the store from Ross Archibald. The Scott's name has become indelibly associated with Belloy and its people.

Following World War II and the opening of the Lassiter Project, Belloy blossomed into a bustling place. Practically every 1/2 section of land in the vicinity boasted a farm family. Names that were prominent in those busy days included: John Negaard, George Johns, Roy Hunt, Rose Hunt, Carl Best, John Peters, H. Best, Stan Horn, Bill Hornby, Floyd Demay, and the Kennedys.

Early pioneers were: Bankheads, Fergusons, Selbys, Sinkwiches, Howards, Fortiers and many others. Store owners included: Alphonse Lorent, Omar Pollin, Andrew Ramsfield, H. Sveinunggaard, Archibalds, Scotts, Phillips, and Lewis's along with Annie Urness and Fred Warren. During the busy days following World War II, Belloy boasted two stores; pool room, (Dumas); butcher shop (Fowler and Harvey Lewis); restaurant (Percy Stevens and Dale Ferguson); machine agency (Scotts); garage (Archibald). Elevator agents were: Mr. Clough, J. Culshaw, Earl Stauffer, Neil McLaughlin, Bill Cathcart, Elmer Larson, Percy Stevens, Mr. Jarra, Bill Sallis, Gowen Moxley, Mac Lancaster, Ralph Lowe, James Culshaw, Wayne Grusie, and E. Kading. Station agents through the years have included: Rex Lampert,



Belloy Restaurant - was owned and operated by Harvey Scott, Alex Avery, Dale Ferguson and Percy Stevens, The Aleys. House was the home of Jack Payne and Russell Bell.

Bob Goodwin, Bob Gettas, Spud Shumard, Bill Spice and Jack LeBrier.

We regret the closing of the post office in Belloy. Another fine community it appears is being erased. It is supposed to be called progress.



The elevator at Belloy.

Handwritten bill heading from Phillips store. The form includes a date field (1957), a signature (L. A. Phillips), and a table with columns for item number, description, and amount.

	DATE	1957	ACCT.	FWD.
1	8 milk	18	✓	144
2	3 coffee		✓	360

Bill heading from Phillips store.

**1929 Pool
WHEAT**

ALBERTA WHEAT POOL
CALGARY, ALBERTA

GROWER'S RECEIPT
OF WHEAT DELIVERED TO ALBERTA 1929 POOL

Nº 505117

DATE *Dec 13 1929* SHIPPING POINT *Belloy, Alta*

GROWER'S NAME
(in full)

Fifty one
Net Weight in words

BUSHELS

This is to certify that the above grower has delivered for the account of Alberta Wheat Pool, the above amount of WHEAT, and that he has received therefor the full Initial Payment (less all proper charges), as authorized by them.

ISSUED BY **UNITED GRAIN GROWERS, LTD.**

Per

Agent

NOTE—This Receipt should be carefully preserved by the Grower until all future payments, if any, are dispersed by ALBERTA WHEAT POOL, in accordance with Clause 15 of the Agreement between them and the Grower. This is intended as a receipt to enable him to verify accuracy of any payments and also as his record of deliveries to the Alberta Wheat Pool 1929.

1929 POOL		
Net Weight	Bus.	Lbs.
Grade	Wheat	
Initial Payment	Per Bus.	
Cash Ticket Number	<i>1111</i>	

NOT NEGOTIABLE
RECEIPT ONLY

This Receipt is NOT TO BE SENT to the Pool Office
WHEN WRITING ABOUT YOUR ACCOUNT QUOTE NUMBERS ON GROWER'S RECEIPTS

Grain ticket from the Alberta Wheat Pool - Belloy - 1929. The crop was from land the Ormiston boys, Bill and Norman, rented from T. McDaid. Wheat on the open market was \$1.10 that winter.



Mr. and Mrs. Jim Babbs who operated the post office on their homestead south of Belloy (now the Ted Sallis farm). They also boarded teachers who taught at Steele school.

DATE *Dec. 23 1954*

M *B. L. Howard*

Bill Ripley

ACCT. FWD.

Bill heading from Lewis store.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY—A false declaration makes applicant liable to prosecution

GOVERNMENT LIQUOR CONTROL ACT OF ALBERTA

APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUAL PERMIT (To Purchase Liquor) Nº 273724

HOWARD, STEVEN *BELLOY, ALTA.*

I, the undersigned, being of the full age of twenty-one years, hereby make application for a permit to purchase LIQUOR in accordance with the provisions of "The Government Liquor Control Act of Alberta," and the regulations made thereunder. I am not disqualified under the provisions of the said Act.

Dated at *Spirit River* Alberta, this *2nd* day of *Dec* 1953

S. A. Howard
(SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT)

50c INDIVIDUAL PERMIT (To Purchase Liquor)

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the above named applicant, whose signature is hereto attached, is entitled to purchase SPIRITS, WINE, BEER, and SALT LIQUOR for beverage, medicinal or culinary purposes, in accordance with the provisions of "The Government Liquor Control Act of Alberta," and the Regulations made thereunder. This permit is not transferable and if used for the purchase of liquor for other parties is subject to cancellation.

This Permit unless sooner cancelled, expires on 31st December, 1953.

Issued at *Spirit River* Alberta, this *2nd* day of *Dec* 1953

A. Anderson
(Signature of Issuer)

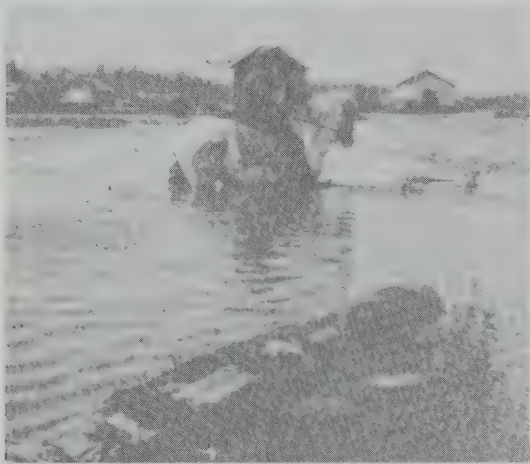
1953



The Bill Ripley Family. Left to Right: Mr. and Mrs. Ripley, Bobby Ripley, Jim Howard, Alice Howard and Jim Ripley.



Home of Bill Ripley which was also the Belloy post office at that time, surrounded by flood waters in the spring flood of 1936.



Justin Sinkevich, an early settler in flood waters on the main street in Belloy.



Friends gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Justin Sinkevich at Belloy in the 1940s. Left to Right: Sanford Urness, Willard Urness, John Kostash, Annie Urness, John and Pauline Pierog, Mrs. Christina Sinkevich, Justin Sinkevich, Annie Sinkevich (Heck), Elsie Sinkevich, Tony Pierog, Mr. Urness, Alvin Urness, Melvin Urness and Walter Sinkevich.



The Aley Family - 1967. Back Row, Left to Right: Bill holding Ronald, Mavis, Mildred. Front Row: Maureen, Ricky and Grandpa Herb Aley.



Belloy Ladies at a Work Bee to plant Pearl Sallis' Garden while she was in hospital. Left to Right: Mrs. Sveinunggaard holding Cindy Sallis, Staffy Wozniak, Joan Scott, Betty Nordvie, Marion Wade holding son George, Nellie Scott. Front Row: Vivian Scott, Dot Botham and Esther Scott.





Some of The Later Settlers in Belloy. Back Row, Left to Right: Allan Blois, Bill Sallis, Harvey Scott and Bill Morrell. Front Row: Bernie Blois, Pearl Sallis, Jo Morrell, Norma Scott and Kitty Lewis. Kneeling: Bill Lewis.



Steele School Pupils - some of the first. Alone at Back: Ernie Simons. Back Row: Bunny Fortier, Yvonne Prevost, Dell Fortier, Camille Prevost and Adolph Fortier. Second Row: Octave Prevost, Fred Simons and Leo Prevost. Front Row: Frances Fortier and Cecile Prevost. Steele School was built in 1922 on the old Fortier homestead which is located one mile west of the Belloy road on the north side of Highway 49.

HENRIETTA MILLER - TEACHER STEELE SCHOOL 1937-1939

I was now a teacher with three years experience but looking back on it I know I still had a lot to learn.

Here I boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Babb. Mr. Babb was also the school secretary. Mrs. Babb enjoyed reading the tea leaves in a cup. But one day a young bachelor came asking that she make him a cup of tea and read his fortune. When she found out that her previous reading for him had come true, she decided it was time to quit.

About the only outstanding event that I remember here was the track meet that we hosted. This was a new experience for me. As far as my memory serves it was a successful day.

Steele district was able to pay their teacher regularly each month. So with some money in my pocket I bought my first car when I attended Fall Convention in Grande Prairie. That car was certainly a lemon and caused me plenty of grief. Think it taught me to be a bit more wary when making a purchase.

Belloy village with a Community Hall was only a few miles away so Steele School was not a social centre as West Vale had been.

In June, 1939, I left the area. My parents had sold the farm and it looked like a move to B.C. was in the offing. This didn't materialize so I found a teaching position in central Alberta.

I still enjoy returning to the Wanham district to renew friendships.



Steele School - 1938-39. At Back (as far as we have been able to identify them): Iona Gilmour, Wanda Fraser, Blanche Tansem, Helen Francis, Elizabeth Francis, Ruth Nolde, Pearl Bodette and Amy Babbs. Boys, Left to Right: Dave Tansem, Ronnie Ferguson, Bill Aley and Clarence Tansem. Front Row: John Karpinski, Leonard Gilmour, Hillas Francis and Leonard Hansen.



Steele School Girls - 1944. Back Row, Left to Right: Agnes Bolduc, Victoria Karpinski and Ivy Aley. Second Row: Helen Kasprow, Lorna Bolduc, Erna Bankhead. Front Row: Ilene Kasprow, Barbara Karpinski, Grace Bolduc and Beulah Bankhead.



Belloy School - 1938. Back Row, Left to Right: Annie Kostash, Mary Kostash, Alvin Urness, Mildred Urness, Nita Sinkevich, Joe Jasbec, Teacher. Second Row: Peter Sinkevich, Bobby Ripley, Morris Sinkevich, John Kostash, Melvin Urness, Nick Sinkevich and Jimmy Ripley. This School was located on the Jack Culshaw place in Belloy.

Steele School Boys - 1944. Leonard Gilmour, John Kasprow, Walter Kasprow, Leonard Hansen, John Karpinski, Floyd Gilmour, Elmer Bankhead, Carl Gilmour and Eric Hansen.



BELLOY

PROVINCINATION: 1936
 SOURCE: 1936
 Date, by whom & how:
 SCHOOL DISTRICT NO: 4731
 LOCALITY: Original site SW 27-78-2-W6
 Present site SW 15-78-2-W6
 POPULATION:
 PIONEER SETTLES: Mr. R.C. Ripley, Mr. Blain Ward, Mr. Urness,
 Mr. Sinkevitch.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES & OCCUPATIONS:

WAR HEROES:

REMARKS: (HISTORICAL SURVEY SCHOOL DISTRICTS)
 Original school & site sold 1949. School now held in old Steele building which was moved to site in hamlet of Belloy.

(From the Archives of Dept. of Education).



Belloy School located in the north end of Belloy District - on Fred Kozeluk's land. Teacher was Mr. Bill Stephaniuk. Students were: Melvin Urness, Johnny Kostash, Alice Howard, Agatha Kozeluk, Vera Sinkevich, Ruby Sinkevich, Nick Sinkevich, Pearl Bodette, Annie Sinkevich, Sylvia Bodette, Faye Culshaw, Art Bodette, Henry Kozeluk, Alex Kozeluk, Rollie Paulin, Bill Sinkevich and Elsie Sinkevich.



Belloy School north of the railroad tracks in the hamlet of Belloy. The old Steele school was moved to this location and a second room was added.



Work Bee. Adults, Left to Right: Mrs. ?, Alice Patnod, Teacher; Nellie Scott on tractor.



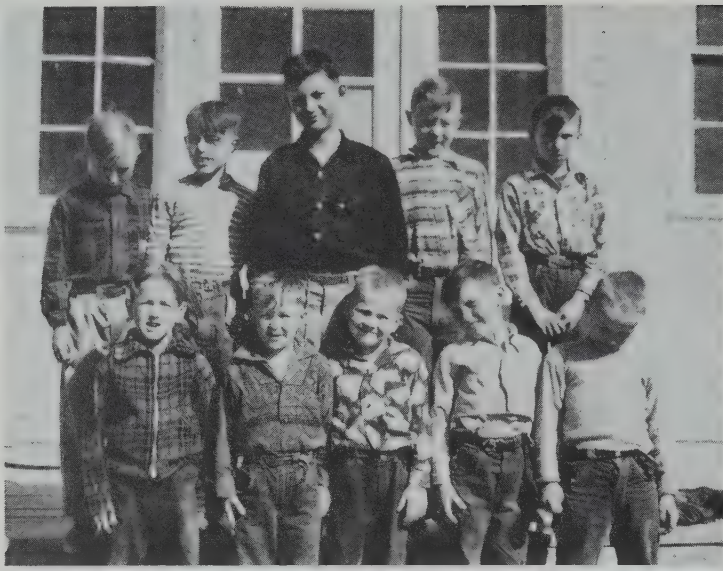
Work Bee at Belloy School.



Christmas Concert Night in Belloy Hall - 1940s. Back Row, Left to Right: Wally Sinkevich, Annie Sinkevich, Allan Scott, ?, ?, Harold Lewis. Front Row: Art Bodette, Alex Kozeluk, Edward Pierog, Eric Hansen, George Cathcart, Jack Howard.



Belloy School - 1950s. Back Row, Left to Right: Lorraine Shmyr, Lois Sinkevich, Emily Sinkevich, Dorothy Bodette, Jackie Laughland, May Sinkevich, Gladys Scott, ?, Vivian Scott. Second Row: Raymond Shmyr, Wayne Grusie, Tony Pierog, Dennis Shannon, Don Hansen, James Culshaw, Walter Sinkevich, Ralph Bodette and Ken Hansen. Front Row: Ted Pierog, Ray Moline, Bud Sutton, Harvey Laughland and Allan Shannon.



Belloy Boys - 50s. Back Row, Left to Right: Doug Culshaw, Wayne Nordvie, Dennis Shannon, Fred Lewis and Dick Scott. Front Row: Bert Ouelette, Varley Scott, Mike LaBrier, Ted Sallis and Bill (Sonny) Morrell.

CHURCHES

At this time Belloy had two churches. The Anglicans moved their little log church from the Babb's land (now Ted Sallis' land) into the hamlet.

The Roman Catholics bought a church in Sexsmith and hired the Littmans to move it to Belloy. The church was an old one and did not cost too much. The moving was the biggest expense. Money was collected from the congregation to pay for both. Volunteer labor was used to establish it upon its present location. The first priest to hold services in the church was Father Thomas, followed by Fathers Marceau, Ruel and Proux.

In 1957 the Presbyterians began holding services in the old Anglican church, now the Legion Hut. In 1960 Belloy Community Association purchased the Belloy School, and thereafter Presbyterian Church Services, Sunday



Congregation at Belloy Roman Catholic Church. Left to Right: Spud Schumart, Tim Lane, ?, Stanley Pierog, ?, John Pierog, Pauline Pierog, ?, Harry Heck, ?, Annie Heck, ?, Ted Pierog.



Legion Hut in Belloy that was used for a time for Presbyterian Church services. It was formerly an Anglican Church that was located at the Belloy corner on Highway 49.



Raising the steeple on the Catholic Church in Belloy following the moving of the church from Sexsmith to Belloy in 1952.

School, Daily Vacation Bible School classes were conducted in the old school. Later the Presbyterian Church purchased the school and land from the Belloy Community Association and received the title in 1965. In 1971, due to a small congregation, it was decided to cease services in Belloy. Most of the congregation now worship in the Knox Presbyterian Church in Wanham. Ministers serving the Presbyterian Church were: Reverend D.L. Campbell, followed by Reverend William Nesbitt, Reverend Gordon Williams, Reverend H.W. Groves, and Reverend Ken Innes. The Belloy School and property were sold to Lawrence Scott.

Gradually things began to change in the thriving little Hamlet. With better roads and more cars people became more mobile and began going to the larger centres to do their business. The Phillips closed their store and moved to Chetwynd, British Columbia, establishing a business there. The Scotts closed out their business and turned to



Daily Vacation Bible School - Presbyterian Church Belloy - 1958. Back Row, Left to Right: Ross Kinsler, Student Minister; Pat LaBrier, Varley Scott, Michael LaBrier, unknown, Dick Scott, Doug Culshaw, Marvin Hansen, Sonny Morrell, Joan Scott. Middle Row: ?, ?, Marie Foote, Diane Blois, Carolyn Urness, Carol Blois, Eleanor Hansen, Wendy Blois, ?, Bev Morrell holding Dene Botham. Bottom Row: Vivian Scott, Leslie Urness, Gloria Morrell, Noreen LaBrier, Naida Botham, ?, Jo Morrell, Hazel Morrell.

farming. The restaurant was gone, as were many other businesses. When the Lewis Store burned, it was really the final blow.

The Willard Urnesses built a small store and post office which they sold to Freddy Warren. But when rural mail delivery started in the community the post office was closed, and Fred also left for greener pastures.

Today about the only buildings left in Belloy are the

Roman Catholic Church, the Community Hall, the curling rink, Legion Hall, and a few other equally deserted reminders of the 'good old days'.

As you travel Highway 49, you will see a sign reading Belloy Road. To many it will not mean much. But those who once called Belloy home, remember a day when the sign read simply, Belloy.



Old Steele and Johnston Stopping place. A. L. Fortier and family living in it in winter of 1920.

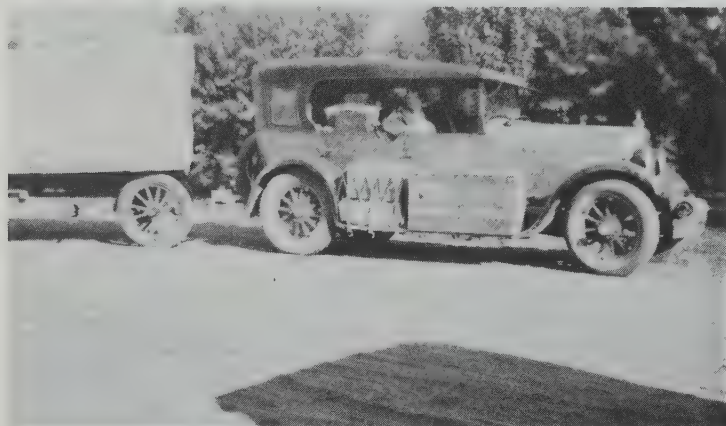
THE PEORIA DISTRICT

by O.L. Toftner

The first white settler of the Peoria District was R.W. Starrett, who squatted here in the year of 1917 and was followed a few months later by his family, consisting of wife and baby boy. (Incidentally, that baby boy has lately been killed in an air-crash when, as a pilot, he crashed on a flight into the N.W. Territories from Hudson, Ontario.) A few, perhaps half a dozen, returned men from World War I squatted or filed on land here shortly after Mr. Starrett, but none of them actually took up residence. Mr. Starrett was engaged in the ranching business. He bought his foundation stock at the very high price prevailing at that time, and in a few years the high



Tent of Mr. and Mrs. O.L. Toftner when they first came to Peoria.



Clarence and Nina Rude leaving Chico, California in 1930 for the Peace River Country.

price changed to a very low price for stock. After some five years of trying experience Mr. Starrett sold out and departed for eastern Canada. Later he engaged in a freighting business into the north, and in this he made good in a big way. We may add, that the first winter that Mr. Starrett and his family lived here, they lived in a tent and later in a log house.

On August 30, 1920, O.L. Toftner and his son, Lawrence then 18 years old, filed on land, the same that they now occupy. Within a very short while they were joined by Mrs. Toftner, wife and mother. They, then, must be considered to be the original pioneers of the



Ruby Reiswig and Mrs. Brucks in front of the Reiswig store in Peoria.



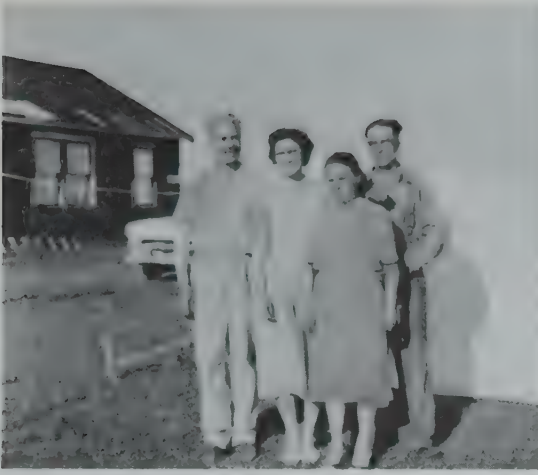
Alfred Amundson (an early settler in Peoria) with daughter Frances (Mrs. Majorique Boudreault).

Peoria District. When the Peoria post office was established the name suggested was 'Toftner', but Mr. Toftner disclaimed any and all suggestions that this was an honor coming to him. He suggested the name of Peoria and it was adopted. Mr. and Mrs. Toftner earned their living for years, and so did son Lawrence, by working out at such times as they could. In the meantime, they cleared a little land for cultivation.

Clearing land at that time was not as easy as it is now, after all the bush fires have done most of the clearing. Mr. Toftner and son Lawrence took up actual residence on April 2nd, 1921, and it was home for years.

Shortly after the Toftner family came, Roy Levrington and Frank Waniski arrived. Waniski left some time ago. Roy was a single man until he passed away. He was the second pioneer of the Peoria District. He filed on land early in 1921.

In 1926 and 1927 the Reiswig families moved in and took up land. They were many and they had many friends. Settlement and developments were speeded up, to a point where the best of the district was soon absorbed. Peter Myrland, Marius Olson and the Amundsons were among those that came in about that time. Roads? Well, we had none. The only road into the



Mr. and Mrs. Jake Brucks on the right - 1956. Mr. Brucks' brother and his wife on left. The house in the background was their home and also the Peoria Post office.

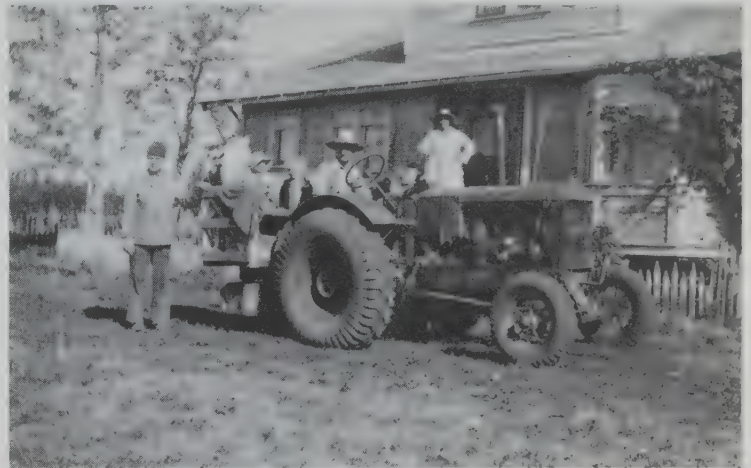
district was a trail made by a trapper, Mr. Selby from Belloy, and it was very hard to get a wagon through. We could not get to Wanham direct with a saddle horse. Trails were cut through the wilderness by volunteer labor. Farming started in a small way. A threshing machine was brought in on sleighs by the Toftners. Milk and butter were produced and we were away to a start.

The first school was started in about 1928. The house was built by volunteer labor. The lumber was sawed by the Reiswigs, who had procured a saw-mill. This sawing was free. There was no one to pay for it. The first Board of Trustees were George and Dan Reiswig and O.L. Toftner. Mr. Toftner was also the Sec-Treasurer. Dan dropped out after a few years, George was a trustee for nine years, and O.L. Toftner for eleven. At the end of those terms they stepped aside and left it to others, and their achievements are now modern history.

The community hall was built during the worst of the depression of the early 30's, also by volunteer labor for



Five Generations of the Rottacker Family. At Back: William J. Rottacker. Front Row, Left to Right: Raydene Lehman holding son Arlo, Mary Hagel and Elva Olson.



Mr. and Mrs. Jake Berg and family - 1946. Jake built a seat at the back of the tractor to carry the family. Left to Right: Kelly, Lindy, Nancy, Jake, Donna and Lill.

the most part, and by the Reiswig saw-mill which again did the work of sawing the lumber for next to nothing. The building of this hall is perhaps due to George Reiswig more than anyone else. It is well remembered that when most of us were rather discouraged, George, with characteristic determination, rallied the forces behind him and the hall was built.

As for food, well it was good and abundant. There was moose and deer meat, and we managed to get flour and a little groceries. As for the homes, the Starretts lived in a tent for about a year. The Toftners likewise. Then came log houses. There was no fancy furniture, but we were comfortable and I think we may say, happy. Our requirements and expectations were not extravagant.

The first church in the community was built in 1930 by the Seventh Day Adventists and it is still the only church here, most of the people being of that denomination. This too, was built largely by free labor and again the Reiswig saw-mill contributed its part. Much of the credit for the building of the church and the progress it has made must go to Elder P.A. Rick and his untiring work



John Krenzler's garage in Peoria. Albert Davis and road grader on the left. Krenzler's house in back.



*"Casey at the Bat"
for an amateur hour.
Orville Berg and
Merle Toftner.*

THE BEST OF
EVERYTHING
AT THE VERY
BEST PRICE

A CHEERY
GRIN
WELCOMES
YOU IN

HAROLD REISWIG

GENERAL MERCHANT

GAS & OIL

PHONE 1 Short 3 Long

Peoria, Alta., 19

in the community. It is a credit and a blessing.

Early in the history of this community a store and post office was opened by George Reiswig. This was later taken over by Peter Reiswig and still later by Harold Reiswig, who still keeps the store, a well-stocked store it is for a country store. But the post office was moved to Chas. Morris who was postmaster for several years. Mr. and Mrs. Jake Brucks ran the post office until its closing.

Adventures were few and unimportant. As for recreation there was more than there is now. Busy as we were, we found time to hitch up a team of ponies and go for a visit to the neighbors ten miles away more frequently than we can now go a mile with a highpowered automobile. Why? Well, I don't know, but so it is.

As for clearing land, there was nothing to it but hard work with an axe. That is very simple, but the humble *axe*, and the man willing and able to use it, cleared the land and made this a productive community of which we are now proud. It is now classed second to none as a grain producing country. Feed is easily raised in great quantity. It is just as good for stock as it is for grain.

MERSEY SCHOOL AT PEORIA

by Connie Dick

Formal education in this district began in a one room school east of Harold Reiswig's store. It was a public school known as Mersey School. The first teacher was Miss Nichols. This is believed to be in the fall of 1928.

This school operated until the summer of 1941 and the area was then divided into school districts: East Peoria, and Mersey school was reopened 1 mile north and 2 miles west of Peoria.

The teachers were: 1928, Miss Nichols; 1929, Mrs. Maude Wright; 1930, Miss Cox; 1931, Mrs. Moores; 1932, Miss Grace Farwell (Mrs. Edwin Sather); 1933 and 1934, Erica Eckert; 1935, Miss Marie Smith; 1936, Miss Melinowski; 1937, Andy Perka to midterm; 1937, Alice

Bower finished Perka's term; 1938, Alice Bower; 1939, Bernice Quance (Mrs. Long); 1940, Lillian Wilson; 1941, Harold Martin.

This list of names is not taken from a school register but rather from the memory of several people. It is believed to be accurate.



Mersey School - First School in Peoria.



Mersey School. Miss Nichols, First Teacher. Back Row, Left to Right: Alfred Reiswig, Albert Davis, Russell Reiswig, Rueben Seibel, Irving Reiswig, Viola Berg, Ella Myrland, Rose Prosser, Bessie Davis, Miss Nichols. Front Row: Wilfred Reiswig, Orville Berg, Art Ziprick, Bud Ziprick, Goldie Berg, Helen Reiswig, Louise Moritz, Toots Reiswig and Frances Prosser.



Mersey School - 1940. Back Row, Left to Right: Lloyd Pranskat, Ernie Seimens, Fred Bennett. Front Row: Harold Dick, Arnie Sorenson and Adolf Beck.

PEORIA CHURCH SCHOOL

While Marie Smith was teaching public school in 1934, her sister, Lorena Smith, was hired to teach the high school grades and they met for school in the side room of the church.

The folks in the Seventh-day Adventist Church met with Elder Rick and voted to operate a church school. They appointed a school board with chairman, Dorse Prosser; secretary, W.J. Rottacker; treasurer, Fred Reiswig; along with two other members, Dan Reiswig and Pete Reiswig.

Logs were hauled and sawed into lumber to build a two room school, 24' x 40', on a full basement. This school was built across the road from the church. While this building was under construction, the teacher and students met in the church. Mrs. Maude Wright taught the elementary grades and Mr. Albert Tetz taught the higher grades. For school the students piled up the benches in the church and put out long tables to study at. After school on Fridays, the tables were put away and the benches were set up for church.



Mersey School - 1935. Miss Marie Smith, Teacher. Back Row, Left to Right: Wilfred Reiswig, Douglas Brown, Frances Prosser, Toots Reiswig, Fern Stearnes, Irene Rye, Dorothy Reiswig, Orville Berg. Second Row: Nora Evenson, Bertha Sveinunggaard, Hazel Prosser, Thelma Evenson, Bertha Prosser, Freda Beck, Harriet Reiswig, Nancy Reiswig, Russell Rottacker, Bennie Seimens. Third Row: Edwin Wellman, Lloyd Evenson, Ernie Seimens, Edgar Reiswig, Jackie Brown, Georgie Reiswig, Adolf Beck, Virgil Stearns, Harvey Reiswig, Teddy Lipinski. Front Row: Warren Rottacker, Roy Brown, Calvin Stearns.



Mersey School - 1939. Left to Right: Lavina Dick, Freida Beck, Bernice Quance, Teacher; Bertha Sveinunggaard, Esther Sorenson, Nora Evenson.



First Church School in Peoria - 1935. Teacher: Mrs. Maude Wright. Top Row, Left to Right: Eunice Chapman, Ada Knapp, Wilfred Tetz, Douglas Brown, Bennie Seimens. Second Row: Nancy Reiswig, Harriet Reiswig, Roy Brown, Ernie Seimens. Front Row: Virgil Stearns, Orval Lang, Jackie Brown, Calvin Stearns, Harvey Reiswig.

During the school year 1935-36, the new school building was ready for school to begin so they moved in.

Half of the basement of the school was finished and used as a teacher's residence for several years. Some years later, when camp meeting was held in the Peoria church, the residence portion of the school basement was used to cook meals for the visiting ministers.

The furnace and wood supply were downstairs as well. The person chosen to fix the furnace fire always had to go outside, run down the stairs into the basement to fix the fire and then reverse the routine to get back into the classroom. Wood was supplied by the men of the community. Sometimes logs were hauled to the school yard and a 'wood cutting bee' was held.



Some of the teachers were: (this list may not be complete but we hope it is, if memory serves us correctly) Mrs. Maude Wright, Mr. Albert Tetz 2 years, Mrs. Williams, Pauline Wettstein (Mrs. Alfred Rogers), Audrey Taylor, Opal Bechtold (Mrs. Bert Kandt), Helen Horn (Mrs. John Anderson), Melvin Erickson 2 years, Evelyn Schafer, John Melnechuk (dentist in St. Paul), Doris Pashniak, Dorothy Summerton, Elizabeth Spent 2 years, Opal Kandt 2 years.

A couple of years the students from the Mersey school came to Peoria school - an enlarged school family that has provided many happy memories.

There were swings, a teeter-totter, a baseball diamond and a creek that divided the school property. This creek with snow drifts provided endless hours of fun sliding, making tunnels and used as a fortress against the opposing snowball gang. In spring it was almost irresistible with running water that seemed to be almost flood stage through the eyes of a small child. Boots were filled with water or were swept away in the current. In summer it was a challenge for those with bikes who rode down the



Peoria Church School - 1940-41. Teacher: Helen Horne (Anderson). Back Row, Left to Right: Esther Beck, Opal Wunsch, Rosella Banman. Front Row: Phyllis Sather, Violet Best and Gladys Prosser.



Peoria Church School - Mrs. Williams, Teacher. Top Row, Left to Right: Russell Rottacker, Harold Best, Orville Berg, Ivan Lang. Second Row: Orval Lang, Wilfred Tetz, Walter Comm, Don Best. Third Row: Frances Henry, Nancy Reiswig, Harriet Reiswig, Harvey Reiswig, Roy Brown. Fourth Row: Georgie Reiswig, Jackie Brown, Edgar Reiswig, Warren Rottacker. Fifth Row: Bonnie Rae Seibel, Ella Wunsch, Irene Best. Bottom Row: Billie Brown, Ralph Seibel, Lyle Best, Delvin Berg, Rodney Rude.

hill and peddled like mad to reach the top of the hill on the other side.

Bathroom facilities were different then but were accepted as the way of life. In winter, after stumbling through drifts and cold weather, one sometimes returned to find "hard" water. Water frozen in the pail and wash basin made washing hands pretty difficult. So it was necessary to move these things inside the classroom for the winter.

Travel to and from school was varied depending on weather conditions and circumstances. Some walked, some rode horseback, others came by a team of horses - sleigh, cutter or buggy. Blankets and quilts were used to wrap up in in the sleighs and cutters. Some used a closed in sleigh known as a 'caboose'. This caboose had a small woodburning heater in it and windows for the driver and



Left to Right: Esther Kandt, Irene Best, Frieda Beck, Barbara Oliver and Ella Wunsch.

passengers to look out of. A little supply of wood and a couple of bundles to feed the horses were kept inside the caboose.

The children who were walking were given rides by those who had room for them.

In bad winter weather, the horses were given the rein and made their way home. Spring run off usually washed out some sections of road and culverts. Getting to school on time was a real challenge in spring when roads on private property were still snow covered but the main roads were turning to slush. The roads were frozen in the morning but thawed in the afternoon. The same situation prevailed when Rottackers moved home from the bush camps in March and plowed the snow from the main roads with their 'cats' - D6 and D8. But continuing warm weather eventually brought dry roads once again.

Some farmers built snowplows that were horse drawn and were used to plow snow when the snow was not deep or not drifted hard.



Back Row, Left to Right: Miss Dorothy Summerton, Teacher; Rose Ebner, Waunita Krenzler, Gladys Prosser, Ernest Prosser, Kelly Berg, Merle Toftner. Middle Row: Bernadine Berg, Trella Prosser, Connie Comm, Irene Ferguson, Margaret Curley, Julia Curley, Edgar Janot, Wilfred Janot. Front Row: Donna Berg, Trudie Reiswig, Jean Curley, Keith Reiswig, Dennis Comm.

The barn was built in the church yard and was used by those attending church or school. Each family was responsible for their own stall and their own feed. The barn is long gone but the soil from it is now the soil around the new church building.

The school building was the hub of social life in the community. Social gatherings, wedding receptions and Christmas concerts were held in the schools. Christmas concerts were a highlight of the winter season. A stage was put up and curtains, usually sheets matched as well as possible, were installed. Desks were exchanged for planks and blocks to make benches for spectators. Can you imagine how it was possible to get the people from 2 or 3 communities packed into one school room? It was done and everyone was happy to be there.

When Kadot Lake froze over nice and smooth in the fall, it was a giant skating rink. Many people would gather there along with a roaring bonfire, hot chocolate and toasted sandwiches.

Bobsleds for 10 people and driver were made by Calvin



*Peoria Church School
Built in 1952.*



Peoria Church School - Opal Kandt, Teacher. Top Row, Left to Right: Mary Frank, Don Brucks, Mrs. Opal Kandt, Edgar Janot, Donna Berg. Second Row: Mildred Janot, Raydene Olson, Sheila Kandt, Karen Reiswig. Third Row: Leo Janot, Joan Kozak, Richard Dick, Wilfred Davis, Josie Kozak, Roberta Kandt. Fourth Row: Nancy Comm, Seigred Janot, Carolyn Krenzler, Marjorie Reiswig, Adela Best, Evelyn Frank. Fifth Row: Reg Reiswig, Marvin Brucks, Garth Comm, Oran Davis, Johnnie Frank, Lindy Comm and Sherry Rottacker. Front Row: Larry Best, Mona Lee Rottacker, Lacey Reiswig, Shirley Ann Kandt, Marsha Kozak and Valerie Olson.

Rottacker, Irving Reiswig and John Krenzler. Holidays were family days spent on the hills going down the Wanham or Belloy hill or down the winding Kadot creek road. If you were able to hang onto the bobsled around the first bend, chances were good that you'd end up in the snowbank on the next curve. Traffic controllers were placed at the top and bottom of the hill to maintain safety. Those who rode the sled down sometimes had to lend their shoulder to the towrope and pull it back up so someone else could go for a ride. A tractor or jeep were welcome relief, they were able to pull the bobsled back up the hill with the greatest of ease.

Remember the line-up of people at Central hall for

PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 4885

by Elaine Dick



The Opening of Peace River Junior Academy (Peoria Church School) in 1966.

inoculations? Oh the tears, the fears and then relief. It was worse in anticipation than reality, usually.

In 1952, the two room school was torn down and a one room school was built in Peoria. This location was more central for the students attending school at that time. The teachers there were: (this may not be complete) Opal Kantt 2 years, Trudie Aaserude, Trudie Banman, Bernice Haffner, Harold Pearson, Sheila Gueffroy, Ron Simanton, Walter Schram and Mrs. Wilma Duffy.

In 1965, while John Anderson was the pastor in this district, a new two room school was built in Peoria beside the auditorium on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Rottacker. This school was honored to have M.L.A. Mr. A.O. Fimrite in attendance for the ribbon cutting ceremony at the opening of the school.

The two schools, Peoria and Belloy church schools, joined and a school bus was purchased to bring the students to school. This building has 2 rooms added to it and sometimes teaches up to grade 10 when the school attendance warrants it. It is still being used.



On February 10, 1941, the ratepayers of the area east of the hamlet of Peoria held a meeting at the home of Ingvald and Freda Amundson. Topic: the urgent need for a school for the children who lived too far east to attend Peoria and Mersey schools. The meeting was chaired by Jack Laughland, and Freda Amundson acted as secretary. Some parents who attended the meeting were the Wendlands, Sveinunggaards, Amundsons, Glieges, and Dicks. There were even some interested bachelors like Alan Graham and Halvar Hegna.

Consequently, in the fall of 1941, these ratepayers took out a timber permit and cut logs on the Birch Hills for their school. The logs were hauled to the W.J. Rottacker sawmill where they were cut and planed. The lumber was then hauled to a site on land belonging to Alan Graham, who had agreed to have a corner of the N.E. 1/4-28-76-2-W6th become the site for the school. There Peoria No. 4885 was erected by labor that was totally voluntary. They also built a barn to house the horses that most



East Peoria School - 1952-53. Teacher: Lillian Rambo. Back Row, Left to Right: Esther Gliege, Betty Wendland, Frances Amundson, Frances Wendland (hidden). Front Row: Elsie Gliege, Mary Bjerkseth, Dianne Wendland, Lloyd Amundson, Joseph Bjerkseth, Garry Wendland, Arnold Gliege and Richard Dick.

children would drive to school, during the long severe winters.

The Peoria school opened in September, 1942, with Miss Amanda Kantt as the first teacher. It had a local school board but was part of the Spirit River School Division, which was responsible for the hiring of teachers and maintenance of the school.

It was wartime and teachers were in short supply. The Department of Education licensed high school graduates without teacher training as correspondence supervisors. An entire classroom would enroll with the Correspondence School Branch, and the supervisor would oversee the lessons and otherwise be the teacher. Over the years, some of the teachers and supervisors who worked at Peoria were Esther Robertson, Ben Russell and his daughter Zoe, Eva Zahara, Elaine MacDonald, Lorna

Diebel, Lillian Rambo, Martin Fritz, Nick Schmyr, and Steve Falabrenza.

*IMPRESSIONS OF PEORIA
BY A FARM TEACHER
by Elaine Dick*

I came to Peoria in the spring of 1948, at the same time that a friend, Stafko Misunis, went to teach in Heart Valley. I was to start work on May 2nd. Due to an extremely heavy snowfall that winter, the hamlet of Belloy was in the flood stage and the road to Peoria was mud, mud and more mud. The snowbanks remained along the creeks at the school for 2 weeks after I got there. Lack of money and reluctance to be a quitter, kept me from leaving then and there.



Christmas Concert at East Peoria School.

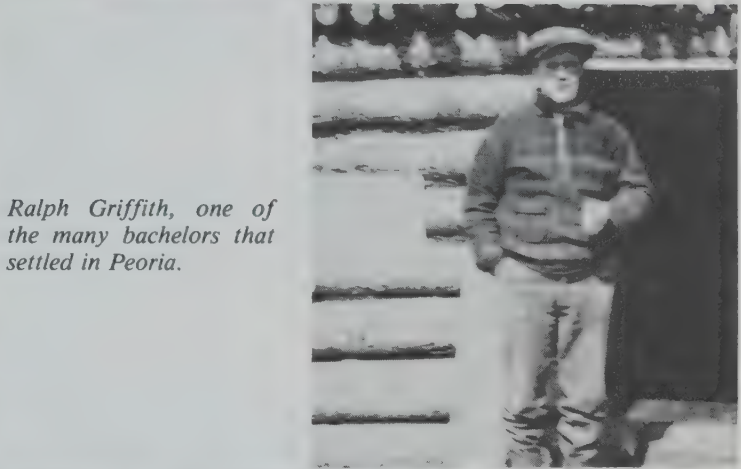
I remember my first day in the classroom very well. I was seventeen years old and facing me were some of the biggest boys I had ever seen. They could have made my stay pretty miserable, but I soon learned that I had an extremely cooperative and respectful group of students. During the three years I taught in Peoria, I never had a major discipline problem. There were 28 students in grades 1 through 9. Families represented were the Glieges, Laughlands, Bjerkseths, Dicks, Janots, Evensons, Osbergs, Amundsons, Wendlands, Griffiths, Davis', Bests and Banmans. Besides hard work in the classroom, I remember the fun we had. The school was situated near creeks and hills ideally suited to winter sports. Our recesses and noon hours were spent playing softball, with everyone participating, and the teacher usually acting as umpire.

YES, TEACHER

One day we were to spend the afternoon playing Anti-I-Over the schoolhouse. I spent several minutes lecturing the students about being careful of the windows. Out we went and in a few minutes I caught the ball. I wound up and threw it up -- straight through a window!!



Grace and Charlie Leggatt in 1952 just before they moved to Anaheim, California.



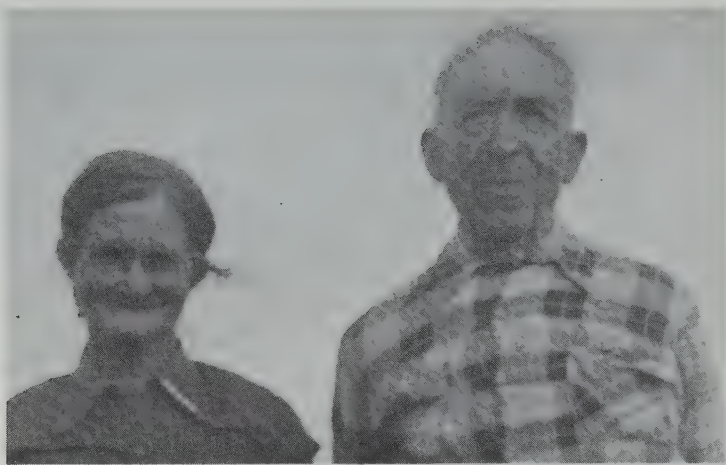
Ralph Griffith, one of the many bachelors that settled in Peoria.



Mr. and Mrs. Emil Gliege on their 20th Wedding Anniversary in 1947.

A NEW BARN - THE HARD WAY

During the winter of 1949, the need for a new barn became apparent. Most of the children drove horses and covered vans to school. These vans were equipped with small wood-burning heaters for use in extremely cold weather. And extreme it was - sometimes dropping to minus 40° F. The local board wrote several letters to the Spirit River School Division, but by spring we had no assurance that we would get a new barn. That spring the schoolyard was covered by tall dry brome grass and we set out to burn it off, a bit at a time, to make our ball diamond and schoolyard more presentable. One morning



Albert and Mary Evenson - early settlers in the Peoria district.

the school inspector, Mr. Schrag, paid us a visit. He left just at noon and we went out to burn another patch of grass. However, a very strong east wind began to blow and our grass fire got out of control. With only 2 cream cans of water on the entire schoolyard, the barn went up in smoke! At about the same time a fire in the Heart Valley schoolyard got away and burned a neighbors granary. Shortly a directive arrived from the School Division saying 'please do *not* burn any grass in schoolyards'. However, that summer we did get a new barn!



The Evenson Family. Left to Right: Clifford Evenson, Mayther Hryciuk, Thelma Hryciuk, Irene Evenson, Arnold Evenson, Jack Buckley, Nina Buckley, Mabel Likes, Leonard Evenson, Nora Olson.

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Besides being the educational centre, the schoolhouse was the entertainment centre for the surrounding community. The big night of the year was the Christmas Concert. A crude lumber stage was erected and white bed sheets were strung on wires to close in the stage, and provide dressing rooms offstage. Gas lanterns provided light and planks laid on blocks provided seating for the packed house. We spent weeks preparing, and the whole community was involved. I remember one day when several mothers came to the school with sewing machines



Lloyd and Grace Evenson on their Wedding Day.

to make dresses for drills and robes for kings and shepherds. Santa Claus always paid a visit and passed out gifts and candy bags to all the children. All the mothers brought lunch and coffee was made in a copper boiler on the old barrel stove. On the last day of school each June, we had a picnic and dance. Other functions held in the schoolhouse were box socials, card parties and baby and bridal showers.

Peoria was extremely lucky to have Grace and Charlie Leggatt living in the district. Grace was an English war bride, who had been an entertainer in London. As well as being a very talented pianist, she sang English music-hall songs. She was the only band we ever hired for dances. Charlie was no mean entertainer himself, and they often combined to entertain audiences for hours.

Several times the Leggatts, George and Anne Wendland, Maurice and Mona Griffith, Mellie and Alfred Amundson (and anyone who happened to be interested) combined their talents and presented community concerts that included plays, skits and musical numbers. Such diversions were welcome during the winter months, when the whole district was snowbound. It was only after the school was centralized, when the buses began running to Wanham, that roads in Peoria were snowplowed in the winter.

In July, 1956, the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Thompson, and the Wanham board member, Mr. Christensen, held a meeting in Peoria school to outline plans to centralize the school. The pupils would be bussed to Wanham, where a high school education would be available. That September the Peoria school was closed. It was later purchased by the community, to be used as a community centre. However, the loss of the school in the district was the end of the small closely-knit community, and before long the school became just another vacant building - a relic of the past.



PEORIA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

In the beginning of the year 1927, Peoria was almost without an inhabitant. When the warm weather came in spring, the people began to move in. For almost 2 years there was not more than a mile of road in the whole district on a road allowance. The roads and trails followed the path of least resistance. So rapid was the settlement during the summer that on January 22, 1928, Elder O. Ziprick was able to organize a church of 21 members, half of the settlers then. Until this time, the members had met in homes for worship. From the time of church organization until a new church building was ready, these faithful members met in the school.

The charter members of this first church were: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Reiswig, Mr. and Mrs. George Reiswig Sr., Mrs. Myrtle Reiswig, Mr. and Mrs. Dan Reiswig, Mr. and Mrs. Jake Berg and Viola, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Seibel, Mr. and Mrs. Moritz, Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow Prosser, Dorse and Ivan, Mrs. P. Seibel, and Mr. and Mrs. Pete Reiswig.



First Seventh Day Adventist Church in Peoria - 1930.



Peoria Seventh Day Adventist Church in the Winter of 1949.

The first baptism was held on August 11, 1928, at which time Elder O. Ziprick baptized 5 young people. By December, 1930, the church membership reached 55.



Peoria Church - Primary Sabbath School - 1950. Back Row, Left to Right: Mary Rambo, Bertha Kozak, Margaret Curley, Jean Curley, Julia Curley, Wilfred Janot, Edgar Janot, Dennis Comm, Hattie Toftner. Second Row: Raydene Olson, Joyce Davis, Richard Dick, Jim Toftner, Keith Reiswig. Front Row: Joan Kozak, Josie Kozak, Karen Reiswig, Sheila Kandt, Donna Berg, Mildred Janot, Leo Janot.

Mr. R.G. Taylor rented his home organ to the church group for 60¢ a month for as long it was needed. The first piano was purchased in 1932.

These folks realized the importance of worshipping together and room was needed for additional worship space. So these believers got together and voted to build a church. They made plans to get logs and saw lumber to build a 26' x 40' building. Each family owning a quarter section of land pledged \$30 - \$35 towards the cash needed for this project. Much sacrifice, hard work and dedication to the job produced a church building by August 30, 1930. This was a joyous occasion as they met in their new building for the first time, though it was as yet unfinished. About 12,000 feet of logs were cut and hauled for the church. When the building was completed, some lumber was sold and the money used for items that required cash.

The men on the first building committee were: Mr. A. Ziprick, Jake Bert, Dan Reiswig, Fred Reiswig, and Dorse Prosser. This building was out of debt and completed ready for dedication on May 18, 1935. The ministers present at that time were: Elder Campbell, Canadian Union president; Elder Rhodes, Alberta Conference President and Elder Rick, Local Minister.

The janitor, Clarence Rude, was paid \$5.00 per month for janitor work including making the fires. Members contributed 10¢ per month towards this project. Some years later the families took turns doing janitor work.

Four members each loaned a gasoline lamp for the use of the church for lighting.

Jake Berg was elected to be choir director. The Grande Prairie newspaper February 22, 1934, states that Mrs. Jake Berg 'had the honor of holding a church office for the longest time' as church organist and pianist when they got a piano.

Due to house fires and other emergencies, the women organized a Dorcas society in 1934. In this way they were able to give assistance more quickly to those in need. At

one time the record shows that several wagon loads of produce, furniture, bedding, etc., whatever people could spare from their own homes, was taken to Wanham to be distributed by the Wanham Board of Trade. It is believed that the surrounding communities participated in the same plan as a fire had wiped out many farms and homes in the Belloy area.

During the winter months, people met in various homes for prayer meeting. By 1936 the church membership had reached 117.

In 1945 plans were laid to build another church as more space was needed again. Will Rottacker cut logs for lumber and moved the old church building to his yard for a shop. This new building was dedicated on September 15, 1951. Elder Walter Striefling was the pastor at this time.

Camp meetings were held in Bluesky, Spirit River, Wanham, Grande Prairie, Fairview, Sexsmith and Rycroft between the years 1920 - 1945. The Peoria church



Peoria Church - Kindergarten Sabbath School - 1950. Back Row, Left to Right: Ruby Reiswig, Martha Janot holding Shirley Davis, Mrs. Freemark holding daughter Marie, Elva Olson holding daughter Merlo. Second Row: Valerie Olson, Reg Reiswig, Clifford Freemark, Wilfred Davis, Nancy Comm, Lindy Comm. Front Row: Terry Davis, Marsha Kozak, Lacey Reiswig, Lila Banman, Rodney Cook, Iris Cook, Oran Davis, Randy Kandt.

or school has been the location of the annual camp meeting since 1945.

As the years passed, much land was cleared and the wilderness disappeared. Along with this progress proper roads took the place of the trails that linked the two communities of Peoria and Belloy along the Smoky River. Graded, gravelled roads and vehicles shortened the distances. Winter roads were kept open and people who had stayed home could now move back and forth freely.

In the summer of 1978, it was decided that the two churches should amalgamate and form a new church body and build a new church. So once again the members donated cash and many hours of labour and a new sanctuary was built. Pastor Vic Gill and Alvin Huether gave able leadership during the actual construction.



Campmeeting at Peoria - 1954.

Sabbath, August 23, 1980, was the day the members of the Peoria-Smoky church had looked forward to as they had pounded nails, swept up, did the wiring, plumbing, put shakes on the roof and painted. This was the day the church was officially opened. More than 500 visitors and members came to celebrate the church's official opening.

Guests who participated in the opening service were: Grant Notley, M.L.A. for Spirit River - Fairview; Elder J. Wilson, president of the Alberta Conference; Dr. Doug Devnich from the Alberta Conference; Elder and Mrs. Henry Bartch from Terrace, B.C.; Reverend Donna Riseborough, Wanham Presbyterian Church; Pastor J. Hertzler from Bethel Chapel in Wanham.

At the time of the original church organization it was called Wanham Seventh-day Adventist church. It remained with that name until January, 1945, when it was changed to Peoria Seventh-day Adventist church. In 1978, with the joining of Belloy and Peoria churches, it was renamed Peoria-Smoky Seventh-day Adventist church.

The following are names of men who pastored in the Peoria S.D.A. church through the years though it may not be complete: Peter Rick, Martin Luther Long, Walter Streifling, Fred Johnson, Garry Schwartz, Harold Reimche, Laverne Krenzler, Clarence Goertzen, Russell Spangler, John Anderson, John Pershing, Lowell Cooper, Curtis Johnson, Henry Bartch and Victor Gill.



New Peoria-Smoky Seventh Day Adventist Church opened on August 23, 1980.



Peoria Seventh-Day Adventist Church - 1929. Back Row, Left to Right: Dan Reiswig, Mrs. Dorse Prosser, Dorse Prosser, August Bohnke, Carl Ganz, Willie Ganz, Otto Nolde, Alex Dofher. Second Row: Jake Triebwasser, Jake Berg, Mrs. Lydia Berg, Elsie Reiswig, Mr. Moritz, Fred Reiswig. Third Row: Woodrow Prosser, George Reiswig Sr., Ezra Reiswig, Ivan Prosser, Anton Kozak, Pete Reiswig, Rose Prosser, Mrs. Moritz, Irving Reiswig, Annie Reiswig, Lucy Reiswig, Grandma Ziprick, Mrs. Woodrow Prosser, Grandpa Ziprick, Annie Dofher. Fourth Row: Willie Moritz, Steve Kozak, John Seibel, Harold Reiswig, Jack Redgrove, Geneiva Prosser, Viola Berg, Esther Reiswig, Verna Moser, Harvey Reiswig, Laura Moser, Dolly Rottacker, not known, W.J. Rottacker. Fifth Row: Orville Berg (with dog), Wilfred Reiswig, Rueben Seibel, ? Bohnke, Bertha Bohnke, Goldie Berg, Louise Moritz, Rosie Reiswig, Toots Reiswig, not known, Francis Prosser, Elva Rottacker, Martha Bohnke, Russell Rottacker, Art Ziprick, Alfred Reiswig, Calvin Rottacker. Front Row: Not known, Harriet Reiswig, Nancy Reiswig, Warren Rottacker, Hazel Prosser, Bertha Prosser, Freda Bohnke. Note: The three unknown individuals in this picture are believed to be part of an Anderson family that came from Stettler.

THE ADOPTION STORY

by Connie Dick

During the "hungry thirties", there were children and babies in an orphanage in Edmonton that wanted homes and several of those children found homes in the Peoria area. In most cases those children weren't matched with the families nor were they necessarily chosen. Interested parents wrote to Edmonton stating the approximate age, boy or girl, and perhaps the color of eyes and hair they wanted. When proper forms were filled out, the child arrived by train in the care of a nurse.

Three sisters: Alfreda Seibel, Lucy Reiswig and Annie Reiswig went to visit sister Emma and Margaret who were attending school at Canadian Union College. On their way down, they stopped at the orphanage in Edmonton to choose two children - a boy for Alfreda, and bring a baby boy home for Lill Berg. Alfreda chose a 2 1/2 year old boy for herself and a little 1 1/2 year old boy for Lill. On their way back from Lacombe, they stopped in Edmonton and took these 2 little boys with them to the train station. Remembering that Lill had asked for a baby, they turned around and went back to the orphanage to get a baby. When they left the 1 1/2 year old there and were walking away with the baby, he cried out to them, "take me, Mommie take me". Alfreda named

her little boy Ralph and Lill named her baby Delvin.

Goldie and Viola remember coming home from school one day a couple of years later to find mom (Lill) sitting by the heater holding a baby boy 11 months old. Kelly was sitting on her lap looking at them with big curious eyes. Lill had written to Edmonton for another baby and the nurse had brought Kelly by train to Wanham. Jake and Lill had left home early in the morning in a covered sleigh to meet the train at Wanham.

A few years later, the folks arrived in the old Peoria church one winter Sabbath morning to find a basket with two baby girls in it, one at each end. One baby was 6 weeks old and the other was 5 weeks old. Goldie and Lill had written to Edmonton for a baby girl for each. A nurse brought them to the station in Wanham - one in each arm with names pinned to each one as to whom they belonged. Bernadine and Connie had arrived in Peoria and quite literally grew up together.

Lill's other daughter, Viola Yonke, had been married for several years and decided she wanted a baby girl by mail order as well. So she wrote to Edmonton and baby girl Betty Jane arrived by train too. This got the ball rolling for Dan and Viola - they had 3 girls and one boy of their own to keep Betty company.

Goldie and Dan Comm were in Edmonton and went to the orphanage to see the babies and chose a dark, curly



The Adoptive Mothers with Their Children. Left to Right: Viola Yanke Holding Betty, Lil Berg holding Bernadine with Delvin and Kelly standing in front, Goldie Comm holding Connie, Alfreda Seibel with Bonnie Rae in front and Ralph beside her, Mrs. Bennett with Alice standing in front of Ralph Seibel, Florence Taylor standing in front of Mrs. Bennett (Mrs. Taylor Could not be there for the picture), Mrs. Davis holding Winnie with Virginia in front of her, Nina Rude with Rodney.

haired, baby. She arrived one week later at the station for Lill. She was 6 weeks old and Donna was the name given her.

Annie and Fred Reiswig adopted Trudy on January 17, 1939. She also arrived at the station in Wanham with a nurse.

Within a few years time, the twelve children on the picture plus Wesley Dopher, adopted son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Dopher, and two girls, Trudy Reiswig and Donna Berg, were adopted by families in this area. This makes a total of 15 adopted children.

Ralph Siebel and Delvin Berg were picked up in Edmonton. The rest came to Wanham on the train in care of a nurse.

Of those 15 adopted children, two have adopted children into their own families. Virginia (Davis) Danielson has three adopted children, two of her own and raised one foster child. Bernadine (Berg) Reimen has one adopted daughter and two sons of their own. Several other children have been adopted in this area in the succeeding years.



Peoria Church School Girls. Left to Right: Esther Kandt, Irene Best, Frieda Beck, Barbara Oliver, Ella Wunsch.

HEART VALLEY POST OFFICE

by Ollie Webber

Heart Valley was the name chosen by Mrs. Jessie McLean for the Post Office she was instrumental in obtaining in 1922, for the community 12 miles south of Wanham. The Post Office was kept in her home until her husband, William, erected a separate building for a combined store and Post Office.

She was Post Mistress until 1935, when her son Alex, (Red) and his wife the former Thelma Sobey, who taught school in the district, took over the business. The building was moved a half mile to the main road in the area. In 1945, they sold out to J. Balkan, and moved to Vancouver.

In March of 1948, the store and Post Office were destroyed by fire.

In succession, Laura Noren, Ed Carpenter, and John Webster kept the Post Office in their homes until rural

mail delivery was begun from Wanham in 1967.

Donald Morrison was the first mail courier, followed by Peter McDonald and Arthur Peebles. The schedule for 1932, (which was for horses) was as follows:

Leave Heart Valley on Friday at 7 a.m.

Arrive Wanham 12:p.m.(noon

Leave Wanham 1:30 p.m.

Arrive Heart Valley 7:30 p.m.

This included a call at Peoria both ways.

In 1933, Alex McLean took over the contract, and in April, 1937, the Post Office Department authorized a twice-weekly mail service. Alex Edey hauled the mail in 1941 and 1942, followed by John Gulick until 1945, when the contract was taken over by Donald Bozarth.

In 1944, a rural route south of Wanham had been requested but wasn't granted for over twenty years!

Ole Linjord took over the contract from Mr. Bozarth, followed by Bernard Ranestad in 1966. A year later, a rural route mail service was established for the area south of Wanham, and became a thrice weekly service, with Mr. Ranestad as courier. Upon his retirement, Mildred Aley took over, and is the present mail courier in Heart Valley, Westvale, and Peoria (as well as other districts served by the Wanham Post Office).

CHANGE IN DETAIL OF TRAVEL					
AIR AND LAND MAIL SERVICES					
Name of Service	PEORIA - WANHAM				
Via	HEART VALLEY				
Commencing	October 21st,	1943	(date of first trip) the contractor for the above mail service will please observe the following change in detail of travel:-		
Leave	Heart Valley	on Tuesday	at 8:00	Intermediate outlay to contract detail	
Arrive Peoria	"	"	by 10:00	9	
Arrive Wanham	"	"	by 12:30	10	
Leave Wanham	"	"	at 1:30		
Arrive Peoria	"	"	by 10:45		
Arrive Heart Valley	"	"	by 17:45		
Last trip on old schedule to be made.. October 17th, 1943				TOTAL DISTANCE*	10 miles.
No change in above schedule to be made without authority, except in an emergency. If the above change affects the detail of travel for any connecting mail service, and authority has not been received to make such change, kindly submit an amended schedule to the undersigned at once.					
Copies of this form sent to:-					
Air and Land Mail Services (2)					
Contractor					
Postmaster at J. A. McLean, Heart Valley					
District Director (or Supt.)					
Peoria, Alaska					
date					



1928 - Heart Valley. Left to Right: Jack Garrett, Fred Light, Ebe Koeppen and Hans Schmidt.

DECEMBER 27, 1932

HEART VALLEY: On Monday night, December 19, an annual Christmas tree concert was held. A record crowd was in attendance and the evening's entertainment was well arranged and carried out by the special committee appointed.

Besides several delightful little sketches by the school children there was an amusing little farce presented by the grown-ups.

Miss Sobey, the teacher, has left for her home to Coronation to spend the Christmas holidays.

Quite recently, a very entertaining play was presented in the West Vale schoolhouse by local talent. The title of the play was Yimmie Yonson's Yob. Mr. Arthur Johnstone was excellent in the leading role. He was well supported by all the remainder of the cast who carried out their parts in a very creditable manner.



The Jim Balkan Family
Storekeeper and Postmaster.



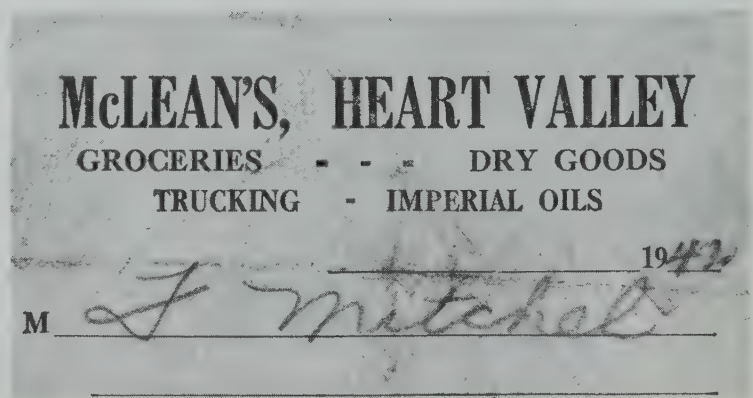
Ebe and Hilde Koeppen Wedding - July 27, 1932. Left to Right: Julius Scriba, Mr. Kless Sr., Willie Ganz, Fred Light, Mr. Fisher, Mrs. Rauchfuss, Mr. Rauchfuss, Hans Boeske, Pastor Gans, Ralph Kless, Mrs. Rosinsky, Little Rauchfuss.



The Heart Valley Tennis Club in front of Howard Meadus Home - 1935. Left to Right: Noble Johnston, Gordon Edey, Lester Olsen, Margaret Beamer, Jean Beamer with Howard Meadus in front of her, Sandy Laughland at the back with Emma Peebles in front, Lily Olsen, Rowland Butterwick, Esther Butterwick, Paddy Meadus, Aunt Winnie and Madge Meadus.



View into Bad Heart Junction - E. Koeppen Place.



North Alberta Land Registration District

EDMONTON, ALTA.

ADDRESS YOUR REPLY TO
THE REGISTRAR
LAND TITLES OFFICE
EDMONTON

IN YOUR REPLY PLEASE REFER
TO FILE NO.

Feb. 19~~2~~h., 1920

Sir,

I beg to enclose herewith Duplicate Certificate of
Title No. **179-R-47** issued in the name of **Frank F. Mitchell**
covering Lot 2, Blk. 9, Plan 8338-A.M. The fee herein is made
up as follows:-

Registration of transfer	\$4.00	
Assce., fund	.10	
Increment Tax	.75	
Postage	.15	\$5.00

1 encl.

O'F

F.F. Mitchell, Esq.,
Grizzley Bear, Alta.

Your obedient servant,
H.J. Dawson,

Registrar.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mitchell, taken in the house that was
built in 1919.



Mrs. Mitchell and Art Tansem.

Basket Social
Adds to Fund
For Hall Work

Grande Prairie
Herald Tribune
Dec. 11, 1952



Bill, Velma and Shirley Mitchell in front of their Hart-Parr tractor at the Wanham Plowing Match.



Bill Mitchell on a 1928 Model Hart-Parr tractor that he restored in the winter of 1980-81.



Hans Boeske - 1948. He came to Canada in 1928 under the auspices of the Lutheran Immigration Board. He filed on NW 5-76-2-6 in Heart Valley where he spent the rest of his life.



Road Maintenance in Heart Valley. Left to Right: Sam Lee, Ellen Lee, Art Noren. Art Noren maintained the district road for many years.



Dr. Margaret Boeske and son John. Hans and Margaret Boeske were married in 1950. Hans died in 1952, just days before the birth of son, John.



Left to Right: Ebe Koeppen and Hans Boeske with a friend just off the immigration train - 1928.



Left to Right: Bob Beaune, Bill Mitchell, Hugh Mitchell and Mrs. Beaune.



Mr. and Mrs. Percy Beaune - Heart Valley.



Julius and Martha Scriba with baby - Otto on horseback 2 modes of transportation for the family.



Bob Beaune on his saddle pony.



Esther Butterwick on Maud.



"Ride 'em Cow-Boy".

Left to Right: Ervin Murray, Laurel Noren and Carol Murray.



Left to Right: Allie Noren, Harry Carpenter, John Noren, Carol Murray and Sylvia Murray.

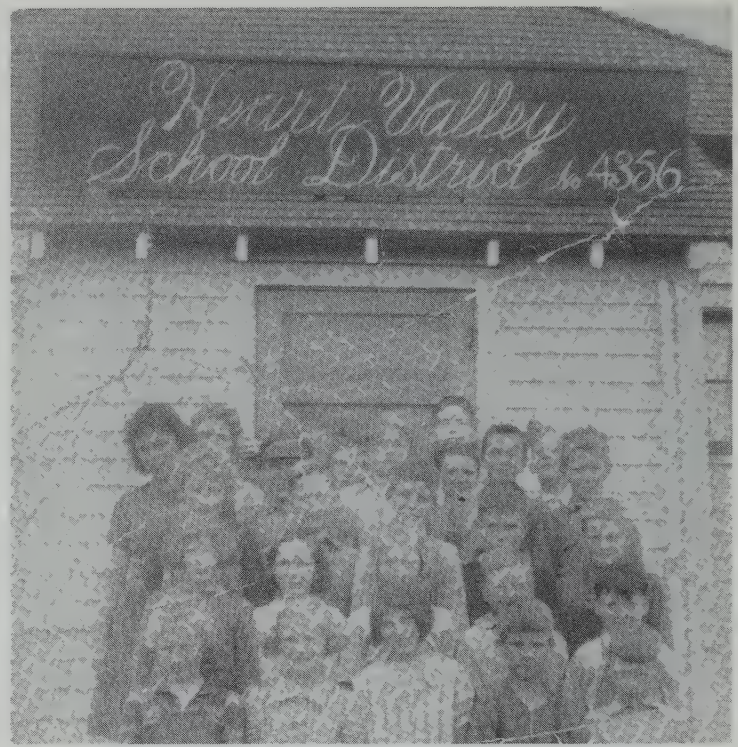
HEART VALLEY SCHOOL (No. 4356)

by Olive Webber

The Heart Valley school was built on three acres of land on the S.E. corner of Section 15-76-3-W6th, it being a central location in the district. This land was donated by Scotty McWhirter.

Lumber for the school was hauled in by sleigh during the winter of 1929-30, from Spirit River. The carpenters which included E. Holmberg and Harper from Spirit River were boarded by Mrs. Frank Mitchell while it was being built. The school had one large classroom, two cloakrooms (as they were called in those days) and a small porch.

The first school trustees were Harold Peebles, Roland Butterwick and Howard Meadus. School opened July 2nd, 1930, with Miss Helen Love as teacher. She boarded at the Fred Pearson home, a walk of over two miles. The first students to attend the new school were ten in number, who ranged in age from five to twelve, Ann (Paddy) Meadus, Nancy and Ronald Pearson, George and Henry Peebles; Sylvia, Gilbert and Donald Morrison, and Olive and Eileen McLean.

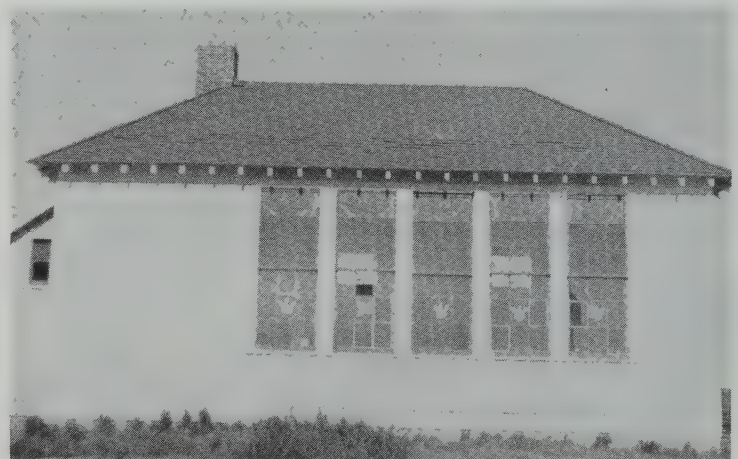


Heart Valley School - 1940. Back Row, Left to Right: Thurza LeBlanc, Jean Edey, Roy Bryce, Bill Mitchell, Bob Beaune, Ray Edey. Second Row: Edith Lee, Victor MacDonald, Clarence Noren, Lloyd Gulick, Hugh Mitchell, Gordon Gulick. Third Row: Margaret Noren, Ruth Peebles, Mary Gulick, Marvin Morrison, Otto Scriba, Kenneth Peebles, Alton Peebles. Front Row: Joyce Lee, Christina Mitchell, Jessie Bryce, Robin Bryce and Leslie Peebles.

5¢ A CUP

As Miss Love was about to be married, and with the plentiful patches of wild strawberries in the vicinity of the school yard, she would pay the pupils 5¢ for each cup picked. This was a real money-making business for children who very seldom saw a nickel in those days. Miss Love taught school until August 15th.

On September 8, Miss Alice Brown came and taught school until February 1931. She boarded first at the Fred Pearson home and later at the Frank Mitchell home which was a short walk from the school. This was the boarding place for teachers for many years after.



Heart Valley School.



Heart Valley School - 1943. Back Row, Left to Right: Ray Edey, Bill Mitchell, Jean Edey, Thurza LeBlanc. Second Row: Gordon Gulick, Hugh Mitchell, Lloyd Gulick, Clarence Noren, Bob Beaune, Gordon LeBlanc, Edith Lee, Victor MacDonald, Roy Bryce, Marvin Morrison, Otto Scriba. Third Row: Alton Peebles, Ken Peebles, Mary Gulick, Ruth Peebles, Margaret Noren. Front Row: Les Peebles, Robert Bryce, Jessie Bryce, Christina Mitchell and Joyce Lee.



Heart Valley School - early '40s. Back Row, Left to Right: Fred Scriba, Allie Noren, Nina Coone, John Noren, Harry Carpenter. Front Row: Carol Murray, Eddie Scriba, Laurel Noren, Carol Noren and Robbie Carpenter.



Last Class in Heart Valley School - Year End Picnic at Bad Heart River. Teacher: Joyce (Lee) Onisko. Back Row, Left to Right: Johnny Noren, Carol Noren, Benny Ritchie, Allie Noren, Fred Scriba, Katie Scriba. Front Row: Rosemarie Scriba and Laurel Noren.

For the first few years, January was a holiday month due to the cold weather. Many of the pupils had a three mile walk each way. This necessitated going to school in August.

Thelma Sobey followed Miss Brown and stayed three years, leaving after her marriage to Alex (Red) McLean to manage the Heart Valley Post Office and store.

Miss Elaine Sellers, who taught the previous year in West Vale came in 1934 and was followed by Ernie Nowlin who stayed two years.

During the war years when teachers were very difficult to obtain for schools in the outlying districts many teachers and supervisors came for a short time. In 1945 and 1946 the school was closed and the pupils attended school in West Vale with Mrs. Alice Johnston as teacher. They were transported in winter by caboose and in the summer by a truck. Both Art Johnston and Ed Tracy picked up the pupils at their homes at different times. In 1947 the Heart Valley School was reopened. Both Edith and Joyce Lee (former pupils) were among the teachers and supervisors for the next few years.

In September 1954, the school was closed for good and the pupils bussed to Wanham.

The school was left in the community and was used for a number of years for social gatherings, meetings, etc. Of the beginners in 1930, only one still lives in the community - Olive (McLean) Webber. A number of later pupils still reside in the district, namely: Bill Mitchell, Otto and Fred Scriba, Alfred and John Noren, Lesile Peebles, Harvey and Jack Gulick.

ORIGIN OF THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN HEART VALLEY

by Norman B. MacDonald

Sometime in the early days of the year 1922, the Rev. Smith, I have forgotten his initials, who was at that time Presbyterian minister at Spirit River, took the matter of negotiating a grant to help build a church in, what was later called Heart Valley, to the missionary society in eastern Canada.

Mr. Smith succeeded in obtaining a promise of \$300.00 for that purpose.

Later, the Rev. Mr. Smith joined the United Church at the time of the Plebiscite in 1925.

Six men from the Heart Valley District or Bad Heart country, as it was then known, volunteered to take out logs and build the church. The names of the six men were: William McLean, Alex MacDonald, Peter McNee, Angus McLeod, Albert Cox and Noble Johnston.

The men decided to build the walls of logs and use the grant to buy boards for the roof, floor, shingles, windows, door and hardwood.

Mr. Peter McNee gave two acres of land for the church and a cemetery. Incidentally, the first person to be buried in the cemetery was Peter McNee's son, Peter, who was accidentally killed in a shooting accident shortly after the church was built.

The cemetery was not registered until 1940 when the Rev. Alex McSween was posted at Wanham and took the

matter up with the proper authorities.

Harold Peebles and I surveyed the cemetery, numbering it into plots. I was appointed caretaker, a position I held until 1965 when I sold my farm and moved out of the district. The building was finished early in 1922 and a dedication service was held later.'

BUILDING OF THE CHURCH

The church was built sometime in 1933 and was duly dedicated with Miss Grigor in charge.

I do not know when Miss Grigor retired from Wanham as I left Grande Prairie in the spring of 1935.

Miss Grigor married the Rev. Mr. Stevens of Duncan, B.C., and is now deceased.

I may add a personal note. Miss Margaret Grigor was one of the most dedicated women I have ever known. While in Wanham and district, she was tireless in her work for her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.



The Heart Valley Church. Miss Grigor in the door.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

by Rev. E.A. Wright

When I was building our church in Grande Prairie, I was approached by a Mr. McFadyen of Heart Valley asking if I could come and hold services in Wanham and Heart Valley as they had no religious services of any kind. My reply was that I could not come on a Sunday but would be glad to come on a week day. So late in the fall of 1930 I visited Wanham and Heart Valley and so commenced our work there.

The service at Wanham was held in the Community Hall and the service at Heart Valley in an old schoolhouse. Each service was held in the evening; Wednesday night Heart Valley, Thursday night Wanham.

The services were well attended. As the work grew, I asked the W.M.S. for a Deaconess. My request was granted and in due time Miss Grigor arrived with Mrs. Ledingham, her friend and companion.

Under Miss Grigor the work grew and extended to Prestville. The following was her itinerary: Wanham, S.S.

and service, morning; Heart Valley, S.S. and service, afternoon; Prestville, S.S. and service, evening.

Besides all these services, she visited the sick and lonely and also ministered to many of their temporal needs.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

In order for Miss Grigor to get around her large parish, I bought an old Ford touring car, had the engine taken out and shafts put in and also bought a team of horses. This was called a Bennett buggy and this was the means of transportation that Miss Grigor and Mrs. Ledingham used during their stay in Wanham.



Miss Hassel and Miss Sayle - two of the Missionary ladies who used to come to Heart Valley School for "Mission Band".

THE CHURCH

Edith Hislop

The first church Christmas concert that I took part in was in 1932. For it I learned a little verse. It was such a cold night Daddy had to cover the sleigh box with blankets and Mamma had blankets over hot stones that had been in the oven all day. Piled under the stones was a layer of straw. Some people had foot warmers but we never could afford one. The horses had blankets over them and Daddy left us at church while he went to Auntie Esther and Uncle Rowland's to put the horses in the barn. Then Auntie Esther and Uncle Rowland walked back with Daddy to the church. Mr. McFadyen was Santa.

Miss Grigor had a real impact on the lives of the people in Heart Valley. She not only looked after the spiritual needs but also the physical. I recall she was instrumental in getting a coat for me and also magazines from a Mrs. T.P. Geggie in Toronto. (Incidentally when we were in Toronto on our way home from Exchange I phoned a T.P. Geggie just to tell how much we'd enjoyed the magazines she'd so kindly sent. Unfortunately the lady I talked to knew nothing about sending magazines to pioneer families in the Peace River country but she did say it likely had been her mother-in-law).

HEART VALLEY

by Olive Webber

The log Church in Heart Valley was built in 1925. William McLean, a carpenter by trade, and Alex McDonald, with the help of other early settlers of the district, took out logs and built the church on a piece of land donated by Peter McNee.

There were no regular services, but in the early 30's Reverend Wright, Presbyterian minister in Grande Prairie, came every so often, weather and roads permitting.

Student ministers would also come in for a service when they were in the area.

The first person to arrive at church would light the fire which consisted of an airtight heater. In winter, this building would just be getting comfortable by the time church was over.

For a number of years, Mrs. Emmie Peebles was Sunday School teacher, which was held before the church service.

When the church in Wanham was built, the services were held by the local minister. Reverend Charles Kitney spent a year in Wanham and later married a Heart Valley teacher, Miss Elaine Sellers. He travelled by horseback.

In 1934 Deaconess Margaret Grigor came to live in Wanham and held services in Heart Valley and Belloy on alternate Sundays. She would drive by team and buggy in the summer and by cutter in the winter, bringing with her a portable organ. Mrs. Marie McLean, of the Heart Valley district, was organist for a number of years.



Sister Jean Edey - 25 years as a nun. The Edey family of Heart Valley were members of the Roman Catholic Church.



1928 - Road to Wanham from West Vale and Heart Valley "Mud Hole" area.

After Miss Grigor left, the local ministers from Wanham held regular services.

The log church was in use until the late 40's and is one of few log buildings left in the district. Many graves of the early pioneers are in the adjacent cemetery.

A HISTORY OF WEST VALE

by Sam Parlee

When Jim Munroe first settled in this district in 1919, the only other residents were the Dan Gulicks who at that time ranched on the west bank of Kakut Lake.

Jim had previously farmed at High Prairie and at one time homesteaded in Peoria near the banks of Kakut Creek.

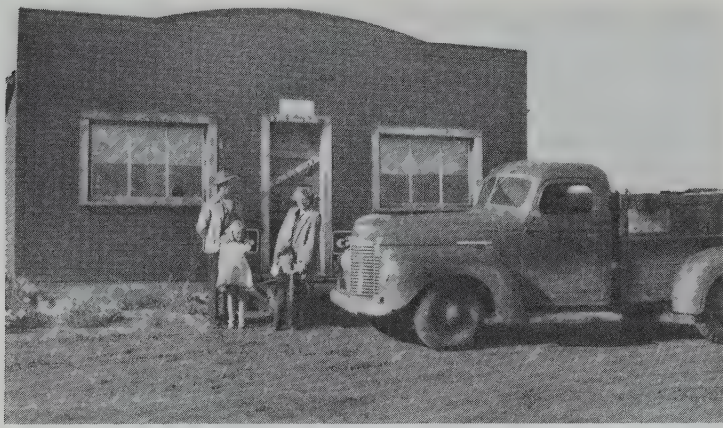
Though Jim took an occasional trip out, West Vale had become his home and here he set down roots.

In 1927 Jim's mother and his brother Ken moved in. By then the Noble Johnstons had arrived, followed in 1928 by the Parlees, Funks, Bohnkes, Wilsons, Olsens, Halvor Rude and Erik Sevre.

There was solid brush in every direction. Roads were nothing but trails and since there were few distractions from incessant labour, a great deal was accomplished. Even though the brush was cut by hand, the area slowly began to open up.



Ted Henry with his first team - Paint and Berry - 1930 working on Bert Sayle's outfit. Note wide gauge wagon.



The West Vale Store and Post Office operated by Buck and Eileen Parlee. Left to Right: Buck, Doreen, Eileen and Allan.



Sunday at the Johnstons. Doris Williams, Jim Balkan, Maggie Ungstad, Audrey Weldon, Ed Prevost, Calvin Johnston, Art Johnston, Dave Parlee, Nola Johnston, Marilyn, Larry and Barbara Johnston, Eva Parlee and baby Linton, Mrs. Balkan and daughter Lillian and Morgan Parlee.

The nearest store and post office was at Wanham. Previous to that, mail and supplies were brought in from Spirit River.

By 1930, enough families had arrived to form a school district and a meeting was called for this purpose. First trustees were Lawrence Wilson, Dave Funk and Bill Hallock. Ken Munro was appointed secretary-treasurer.

Eleven hundred dollars was obtained through loan to pay the contractor, Mr. McDougals, wages and to purchase necessary material. A good deal of the material was donated as was all lay labour.

"WEST VALE NAMED"

After much controversy the name West Vale, suggested by the late Harry Cairns and derived from the fact that the district was located west of the valley of Heart Valley was considered appropriate and accepted.

School opened in September, 1931, under the able tutorage of Miss Alice Hawkinson.

About '32 or '33 the formation of a "United Farmers of Alberta" local was suggested by Nels Lee. It shortly became a reality with Lawrence Wilson as president and Ken Munro as secretary. The group met once a month

and at one time boasted 70 members.

These monthly get togethers became the focal point of both business and entertainment. After the business had been taken care of dramatics or ball games were enjoyed.

The first ball team consisted of: Albert Funk, Art Johnson, Harry Cameron, Lester Olsen, Clifford Olsen, Gordon Edey, Paul Nagel, Carl Nagel, "Red" McLean and Ken Munro.

An active F.W.U.A. came into being as an auxiliary to the F.U.A.

Annual picnics were held in Johnston's pasture, on the school grounds and up by the old coal mine site (now the property of the Wes Albert).

Spiritual education was presented by many different people of several faiths but the best known of these in the early years was Miss Grigor, (Deaconess of the Presbyterian Church) who was stationed in Wanham. She held church services at the school in West Vale every Sunday, come rain or shine. Her mode of travel was a Bennett buggy drawn by a team of horses.

Miss Grigor also conducted Mission Band for the children during the week.

In 1935 heavy rains resulted in severe flooding. Bridges were washed out and the district was isolated for weeks. Mailmen and others forded the swollen Kakut Creek on horseback.



Left to Right: Arthur Johnston, Mary Wilson, Lawrence Wilson and Thelma Wilson in front of the Wilson home.



An Evening Gathering at the Gulicks. In the picture are Jenny Funk, the Gulicks and the Johnstons.



Mr. and Mrs. Dan Gulick beside their new car.

CENTRAL HALL

by Sam Parlee

It was in the winter of 1932 that we first held a meeting in the West Vale School to examine the possibilities of building a community hall that would serve the three districts namely Heart Valley, Peoria and West Vale.

George Reiswig and Wm. J. Rottacker were in attendance and offered to cut the lumber without charge if the logs could be drawn into the mill.

A second meeting was called at the Mersey School where canvassers were appointed to cover the area and to take pledges from any settlers who were willing to donate either five dollars or a thousand feet of saw logs.

George Reiswig and Emil Sather were appointed to cover the Peoria District. Fred Birdsall and I were asked to canvass West Vale. Harold Peebles was to work in Heart Valley.

Fred, my dad and I had gone to the meeting early and I had put my team in the tiny barn on the school grounds. When we came out to go home my team was tied to the rig outside covered with frost. It was no wonder as I learned later that it was a private barn and the owner wanted his horses in and mine out.

Fred had a homemade cutter and a team called Maggie and Lassie. That was the only cutter I had ever seen that had every board in it hewn by hand including the seat and



Taken at Bad Heart - 1943 - West Vale Residents Enroute to the Teepee Creek Stampede. Dave Funk, Ed Tracey, Mabel Tracey, Ken Munro, Mrs. Wellman, Olga Munro, Eileen Parlee, Mrs. Beamer, Buck Parlee, Orma Orbenson, Mr. Wellman, Art Bohnke, Fred Bohnke, Mr. Beamer, Eva Jane and Douglas Tracey. Frances Beamer, Gordon Orbenson, Bobby Bohnke.

dashboard. It was wonderfully neat and indeed a work of art. We drove from one settler's home to another and were well received in most places. Some fell in line with our proposal and signed without hesitation. One man who was not too sure about a hall being necessary said we should have been thinking about a park in the Birch Hills. He said "You put this up to yer ole man eh?" another man said "I'm not supporting no Seventh Day Church".

A SCOT OF MANY SKILLS

Out in the middle of the lake we met Jim Edey for the first time. He was hauling a load of hay from south to north. I was intrigued with his handwriting and years later he showed me an award that he had won in a contest sponsored by the Family Herald and Weekly Star. Jim won first prize contending with people of all walks of life in a nationwide competition.

On the same occasion he produced a number of ribbons he had won with his registered cattle.

The committee met again at Emil Sather's to talk "ways and means". It was considered that there would be sufficient backing from the public to go ahead with the project. As it turned out the logs did come in and were sawn by George Reiswig and W.J. Rottacker with the regular mill crew donating their time and effort. The men of the three communities turned out to put up the building.

Later a Turkey Supper was put on, also a three act play to raise money to pay for a fir floor. Mr. Pete Myrland supervised the work with the aid of volunteer help.

The hall was first located on the north bank of the Kakut creek but was moved a mile and a half north to it's present site.

The Hon. Hugh Allen was no doubt the first M.L.A. to hold a meeting there. He was a member of the U.F.A. government prior to 1935. The Hon. Wm. Sharpe who succeeded him in the Social Credit landslide had meetings with quite large turnouts. The Hon. H.E. Debolt and in turn the Hon. A.O. Fimrite also held meetings there. Picnics in the thirties were well attended with the admission fee being as low as 25 cents for grown-ups and children free. On one occasion an argument arose when some people failed to agree on the ump's decision. A stalemate ensued with calls of "play ball". At length George McDonald called out with his powerful voice, "Play ball or give em back their two bits." The game



Bill Hallock and fourup with Alfred on horseback - 1932.

continued.

My dad organized a tug-o-war at one of these picnics. He brought a big rope and a bag of bananas. He had the privilege of picking his team and told the men that each one on the winning side would get a banana, which was a fair prize for depression days. Each man accepted his banana with hearty grace but one, he seized his with a desperate twist. He was the one who would have preferred the park at the outset. Like most of the old-timers the two objectors are gone to their reward whether it be good or bad and leave behind memories to be cherished.



Bill Hallock's First Barn and Granary (Barn was dug into the hill).



Alfred and Shirley Hallock beside Bill's first log cabin - 1932.

COMMUNITY FARM

It was while the Reverend Charles Kitney (United Church student minister) served the area that he and Fred Birdsall attended a meeting at Beaverlodge where a speaker from the University of Alberta spoke on community farming. It was after that that the West Vale Co-op farm was formed. Charter members were: Jim Beange, Wib Buchanan, Bill Hallock, Fred Birdsall, Lawrence Wilson and Ray Metheny.

The old West Vale school was replaced by one built on the corner of Paul Nagel's land and the West Vale Mission Church (Bud Dennis as pastor) was built.

For a while George Tracys operated a country store in West Vale but they left and "Buck" and Eileen Parlee opened a store and post office across from the new school.

Then for a few years things seemed to come to a standstill as many residents moved out and several key personalities in the district passed away. However, the community was not destined to lie dormant forever.

After being without a ladies club for quite some time, the Helping Hands group was formed.

A baseball club originated under Ralph Johnson providing entertainment for the growing young populace. They named themselves the "Kakut Cougars" and joined the Central Peace Fastball League. Though they were not top team in the league, they tried hard and played well. Their main difficulty was a shortage of pitchers. How-



Sunday Gathering in the very early Twenties.



Sunday Gathering. In the above pictures: the Johnstons, the McLeans, the Harold Peebles and the Meadus's.



West Vale School - 1930. It was newly completed (note the nail kegs and saw horse).



Alice Hawkinson - First Teacher at West Vale - 1930.

ever, one of their players in the person of Wes Albert won the Rookie of the Year award trophy presented by the Central Peace League.

Through the efforts of boating enthusiasts and other interested persons together with the able assistance of Mr. Al Fimrite, Kakut Lake was developed into a boating and picnic area.

There was much initiative shown by our residents throughout the years and West Vale has been a very good place to live indeed.



West Vale School - 1930-31. Back Row, Left to Right: August Bohnke, Emil Bohnke, Clifford Olson, Jack Funk, Mabel Funk, Becky Parlee, Thelma Wilson. Second Row: Mayther Hryciuk, Buck Parlee, Bertha Bohnke, Almeda Dofher, Dorothy Beange, Beth Parlee, Lily Olson. Front Row: Cliff Beange, Fred Wellman, Jim Funk, Jo Parlee and Edwin Wellman.

WEST VALE SCHOOL

by Alice Johnston

Alice (Hawkinson) Johnston received her high school education at Victoria High School in Edmonton and then went on to receive her teacher's certification at Camrose Normal School. She taught one year in Southern Alberta and two years in Mayerthorpe before going to the Peace

River Country in October, 1930.

It had been Alice's dream to teach in the north. She was a pioneer at heart. Dozens of applications were submitted for the teaching position at West Vale. The school finally decided on two applicants, Alice and another. A flip of a coin showed Alice the winner.

Alice's reservations mounted when she began her long ride north on a train and track that left much to be desired. At nine in the morning she stepped off the train on to the platform at Wanham only to find that no one was there to meet her. No sign of a town, only bush! Her bewildered look brought the mailman, Cyril Harrington to her rescue. He took her to his brothers' home (Ed Harrington) - where members of the School Board would come. Members of the first School Board were Lawrence Wilson, chairman; Ken Munro, secretary, Bill Hallock and Dave Funk. In the early afternoon Arthur and Noble Johnston and Ken Munro arrived to pick up the new school 'marm.'

Alice was not prepared for what lay in store for her on her first visit to the schoolhouse. The school was a brand new log building and Alice was to initiate it as she was the first teacher in the West Vale District. The school was



Class of 1930 at Kadot Creek. In boat: August Bohnke and Miss Hawkinson (teacher). During this picnic Buck Parlee fell or was pushed into the creek and had to be rescued by August Bohnke.

sparsely furnished with just a teacher's desk, a chair and two blackboards. The rest of the furniture had not arrived. The parents of the children were anxious for their children to start school since some had not been to school for over a year. Make-shift furniture was assembled from sawhorses, planks and sawed off blocks. (very rough). A long table was made of saw horses topped with planks. Benches were made of planks nailed on to blocks. Once in awhile someone would rock the bench they were sitting on and over they would go. Alice taught here for two years.

CREEK ESCAPE

In 1930 the class went down to the creek, a short distance below the West Vale school house. The children

had a great time playing near the creek and in a boat. During one of the escapades Buck Parlee fell, or was pushed, into the creek. A fire was built to dry out his clothes and there he had to stay until they were dry. I don't know what excuse had been given to the teacher, but she never knew about it until years later.

To raise money for the Christmas concert, members of the community, with Miss Hawkinson, would put on plays. From the funds a certain amount would be taken out for treats. The rest would be sent to Eaton's along with a list of the boys and girls and their ages. Eatons would pick out the gifts and gift wrap them and send them to the teacher.

Due to a shortage of teachers in 1945, Alice was persuaded to teach in West Vale once more. She was now Mrs. Arthur Johnston. Since they couldn't get a teacher in Heart Valley, the Heart Valley students were vanned to West Vale.



Early Pupils - West Vale. Back Row, Left to Right: Jim Funk, Mabel Funk, Becky Parlee, Buck Parlee, Thelma Wilson, Jack Funk. Front Row: Beth Parlee and Jo Parlee.



West Vale School Picnic - 1949. Back Row, Left to Right: Becky Nagel, Harvey Parlee, Paul Nagel, Walter Nagel, Bobby Bohnke, David Wilson, Cecil Henry. Second Row: Irene Lee, Patsy Metheny, Rosemary Lee, Mona Bohnke, Sherry Bohnke (preschool), Frances Beamer, Sybil Parlee, Verna Nagel. Front Row: Billy Lee, Lyle Beange, Everett Parlee, Gordon Nagel (preschool), Richard Parlee, Lillian Parlee and Jean Nagel.

HENRIETTA MILLER - TEACHER WEST VALE 1934 - 1937

Such a long time to look back. But I remember my arrival quite clearly. After being met by Edwin Sather and spending the day with Grace and children, I was driven to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Funk where I was to board for the next three years.

There was no time to prepare myself for the onslaught of the children. Next morning it was off to school. I don't remember the details of that day but I must have managed to get everyone to work. Maybe the children didn't realize just how frightened their new teacher was. Thank goodness for children who had respect for a teacher and were accustomed to working on their own whenever possible.

In those days West Vale was a log building, but it was well planned and had a very good floor. There were many good times in that school. Besides the annual Christmas Concert, the district put on plays, whist drives and dances. The school was really the Community Centre as on Sundays it served as a church. The Presbyterian Deaconess from Wanham held services there.

I think school must have gone along quite smoothly. I can't remember any disruptions. But I do remember that one day Jimmy Funk and Clifford Beange got brave enough to put a couple of gophers in the teacher's desk. Needless to say, they returned the gophers to the outdoors.

Those were hard times money wise. My salary was very slow in coming. By the first Christmas I had enough money for my train fare home. However, we ate well. Mrs. Funk was an excellent cook and a good manager.

After three years it was time to move on. I had enjoyed my time there. The Edwin and Emil Sather families were relatives so there was no cause to get homesick. My move wasn't far - just to Steele School east of Wanham.



West Vale School - 1950. Back Row, Left to Right: Sybil Parlee, Frances Beamer, Verna Nagel, Rosemary Lee, David Wilson, Morgan Parlee, Bobby Bohnke, Walter Nagel, Byron Buck. Front Row: Richard Parlee, Jean Nagel, Gordon Nagel, Billy Lee, Irene Lee, Chester Lee, Everett Parlee, Lillian Parlee, Doreen Parlee, Orma Nagel, Stella Henry.



Rev. R.E. Parlee, Buck Parlee and Sam Parlee holding Sybil - 1939.

FIRST JOINT SERVICES

Text for the Sermon: by Sam Parlee

To Him shall the gathering together of the people be.

Bob Parlee and W.L. Clow (Mr. Clow was a student preacher in the Presbyterian Church) held a New Year's service in the hall January 1938. Mrs. Meadus rendered a solo. The hall was not too warm prior to it's insulation days. Everyone kept their overcoats on including the preachers. The collection went to the hall piano fund. Though a Mother's Day meeting turned out more pleasantly, little use was made of the hall for services after that.

In later years we hauled shavings from a mill at Spirit River to insulate the building. We used a threshing machine to blow the shavings into the attic. This was a power-take-off machine owned by David Hutton.

When the park was being established at Kakut Lake the ladies put on a turkey supper in the hall with many districts participating in the event. This gave us a real boost in getting the project off the ground. Stories by Lily Sather and Harold Peebles were read on that occasion which may have provided some inspiration for the local history book.



Rev. B.M. Dennis with his wife Carmon holding baby Carey. Girls, Left to Right: Lynn, Betty, Bonnie and Frances.



West Vale Church Congregation - 1950. Bill Lee, Carl Nagel, Mr. Beamer, Rosemary Lee, Irene Lee, Tom Parlee, Edna Parlee, Walter Nagel, Beth and Becky Nagel, Grandma Parlee, Ada Parlee, Verna Nagel, Sybil Parlee, Orma Nagel, Gordon Nagel, Robert and Johnny Bohnke, Everett Parlee, Billy Lee Jr., Donna Mae Parlee, Eva Parlee, Buck holding Allan, Margaret Parlee, Linton Parlee, Sam Parlee, Byron Buck, Doreen Parlee, Bob Parlee, Eileen Parlee, Irene Lee, Billy Lee, Morgan Parlee and Olga Lee.

Others have written about social events which took place over the years in the hall so it would be pointless to cover these in this article.

Though the hall has long since fallen into disuse, and



The Funk Farm Home - 1936.



The Funk Barn.

the piano has been moved to the Senior Citizens Centre in Wanham, it does serve as a monument to the courageous efforts of the settlers.

THE LASSITER PROJECT

by J. Harper Prowse

The original proposal, on which the present scheme is based, was made to the provincial authorities early in 1945 by one Julian Bair, on behalf of two American businessmen. After lengthy discussions a contract was drawn up between Bair and the provincial government whereby Bair was to clear 100,000 acres of selected land, in payment for which he was to receive 30 percent of the crop therefrom for seven years. The province was to receive a further three and one-third percent in lieu of taxes. Should the 30 percent of the crop which Bair was to receive fail to return him \$14.00 per acre, the government agreed to make up the difference.

This land was to be made available for veterans in half-section parcels. The veteran was to deliver one-third of



Mr. O.B. Lassiter and Ozan McSweeney on her wedding day.

Al Elhorn - 1948. Al was a foreman on the Lassiter Project.



Lorne Hoberg - Lassiter Cook - 1948.

his crop to the province each year for seven years. At the end of seven years, provided he had fully cropped the land, he was to receive title. He could also apply for the cash grant of \$2,320.00 under the Dominion's Veteran Land Act.

Somewhere along the line this project bogged down. Just why, nobody seems to know. In the meantime the government received a great deal of publicity under this scheme and was duty bound to continue. Accordingly, discussions were started between O.B. Lassiter, a large scale farmer from southern Alberta, and the government.

These resulted in an agreement being entered into between Lassiter's Limited, a company formed and headed by Lassiter, and the government of Alberta on August 25th, 1946, whereby Lassiter was to clear 120,000 acres, of which he was to farm 20,000 himself. The remaining 100,000 acres was to be made available for veteran settlement on the same crop share basis as under the original agreement - that is, 30 percent to the contractor, three and one-third to the government in lieu of taxes for seven years. There was no guarantee of minimum return to Lassiter. He was gambling for his return on good crops and the continued high price for grains.

That was the official agreement. The question of financing was arranged verbally between Lassiter and government officials and it was agreed that he would put up \$100,000.00 and get a loan of \$500,000.00 from the Treasury Branch. Lassiter claims that it was his original



Mr. Taylor - He and his father built the bunkhouses for the Project.



Bunkhouses at the first camp. They were built in Wanham and hauled across the Burnt River.

intention to finance through the banks, but that he was asked by the government to use the Treasury Branch instead - which he did.

With his usual energy, Lassiter started to get his equipment and crews together and before winter set in had started work in the Wanham area. To get into the area, he had to construct eleven miles of road from the village of Wanham to the site of operations, in the course of which he had to traverse the valley of the Spirit River - no small task in itself.

In August 1947, the government announced that 35 half section parcels were practically ready for occupation and a draw was held and the land allotted to the first 35 names drawn out of a box.

Lassiter, as his funds were running out, approached the Treasury Branch and the government for a further loan. At the end of October he was still negotiating for a loan, when cheques totalling \$40,000.00, drawn on the Treasury Branch, were refused payment. This, Lassiter states, was the first intimation he had that the government did not intend to give him any further loans. He then attended a cabinet meeting at which the cabinet informed him that his operations had been costing too much. On November 7 he was given notice that his loan of \$500,000.00 would have to be repaid by noon of November 15th or the government would foreclose. He had put up his contract and all his machinery as security, so they could thereby take over everything.

At this point government spokesmen claimed that as Lassiter had spent \$600,000.00 and had only cleared between ten and eleven thousand acres, the project was costing \$60.00 per acre. Lassiter pointed out that \$354,000.00 had been spent on equipment, which should be written off over the entire project. His cost accountant worked out the actual operating cost per acre, up to that point, at \$21.46.

No public explanation had been made. The only explanation was a statement of the Premier to the effect that a new contract had been entered into with Lassiter and that "The veterans would occupy their half sections under the same attractive conditions announced when the Alberta Veterans' Land Scheme was first started".

One of the men who had drawn a parcel of land at the draw was then working in Edmonton. On learning of

what he believed to be his good fortune he completed arrangements to take the farm which he was assured would be ready for him to begin farming operations the next spring. He quit his job in Edmonton, got married, got a job working on the project, and moved his wife to Wanham. There, with his savings, he built a house on skids, which he proposed to move out to his farm in the spring. He figured that he could save up a stake working on the project that winter. When operations ceased he was stranded in Wanham with a wife, no job, no job to go to, and his savings all spent. His farm would not be ready for him in the spring. He was a very worried young man who didn't know what to do - all as a result of the government's action.

Two months of good working weather and time had been lost - with the result that it would be impossible that more than half of the farms would be ready that year. The hard-boiled action of the government's Treasury Branch in its treatment of Lassiter would have brought howls of official protest if it had been a private institution. The government had made no effort to justify its action.

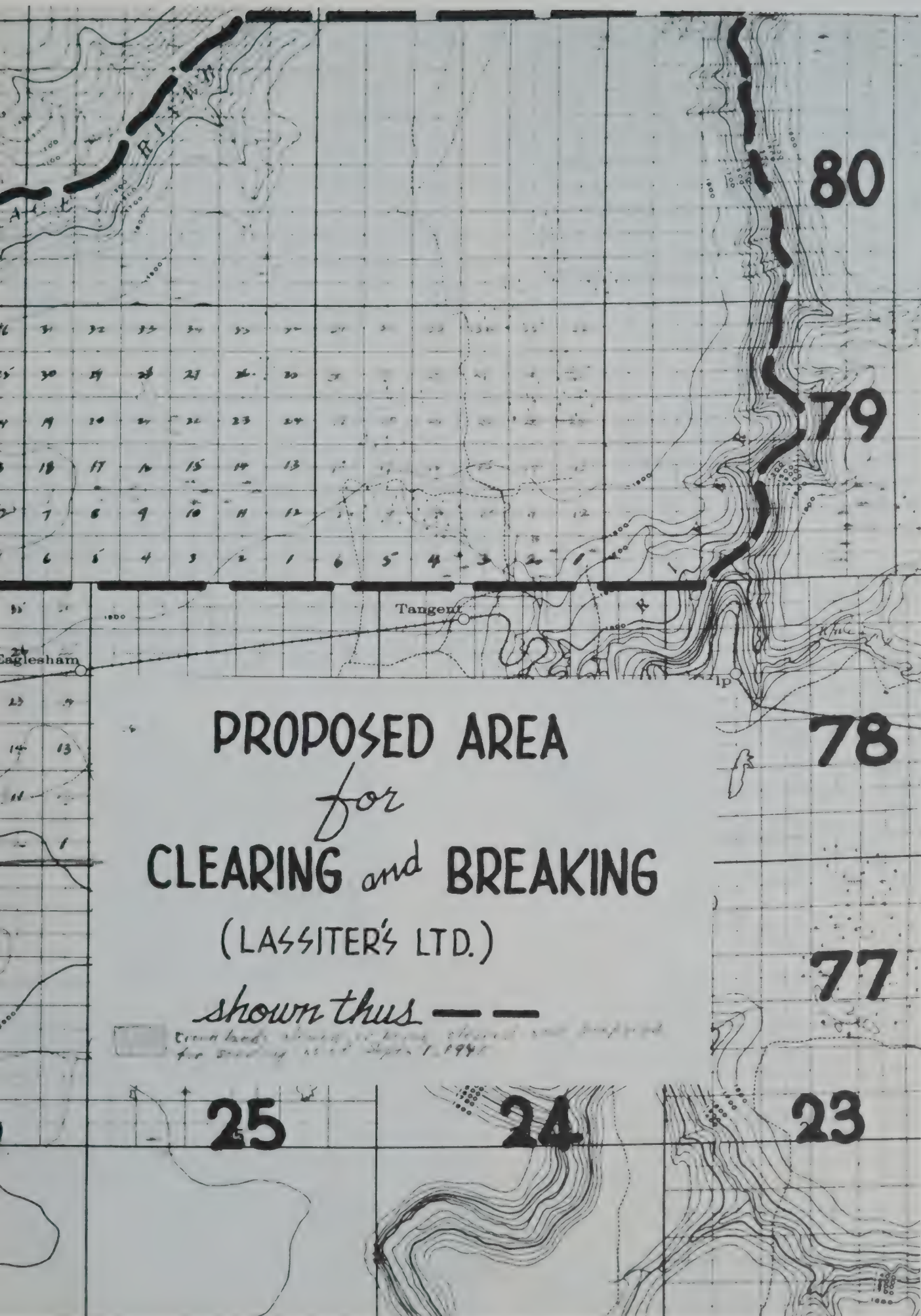
The government could have had three reasons for acting as they did:

First - if Lassiter's work had been unsatisfactory. But all the people in the Peace River country who knew the land and the project stated that Lassiter had been doing an amazingly good job. They believed he had worked out the technique of applying modern machine methods to the old problem of clearing and breaking land. The fact that the government had concluded a new agreement with Lassiter was evidence that they must have been satisfied with his work.

Second - the Treasury Branch may have felt that their investment was not properly secured. If this was the case they should have known this long before the half million dollars were all expended. If they had been keeping a proper watch on the operation, they should have been in a position to bring this to the attention of Lassiter and the government long before the credits were exhausted. If this were the case, then the Treasury Branch officials were to blame and it was not fair that Lassiter and the veteran settlers and the men who worked for Lassiter should have been penalized as they had been.

Third - the government may have felt that the contract was going to permit Lassiter to receive too great a profit. Lassiter said that he expected his returns would run between \$40.00 and \$45.00 per acre - particularly as the land would be specially suited to the growing of seed grains. With costs running just over \$21.00 per acre and diminishing, that would have netted him a profit of about two and one-half million dollars on the 100,000 acres. Now the government may have decided that two and a half million of a profit on an original investment of \$100,000.00 was just too much of a good thing.

The new contract would permit Lassiter, providing his estimate of costs was correct - that is about \$20.00 per acre for the entire project, a profit of about half a million dollars. This meant, again on Lassiter's estimates, that the province would net a profit of a cool two million dollars at the expense of the 300 settlers who would take land under the scheme.



PROPOSED AREA
for
CLEARING *and* BREAKING
(LASSITER'S LTD.)

shown thus ---

☐ Brown lands shown to be cleared and broken for growing as at Sept. 1, 1941

Wanham Job Impresses

Huge Land-Clearing Project Seen By 'Friendship' Visitors

By Jack Deakin

(Journal Staff Writer)

ABOARD THE FRIENDSHIP TRAIN. — Edmonton businessmen saw land clearing and breaking on a major scale as they got their first look at the \$2,500,000 land clearing project at Wanham Tuesday.

Met at the station by a delegation of members of the Wanham Board of Trade, a group from the Edmonton chamber were driven through a large section of this grain-growing district, were shown around town and then whisked off to the land project.



The "Friendship Train" Delegation from Edmonton visiting the Lassiter Project.

The Edmonton well-wishers rode in the back of a large truck to the heart of the land-clearing project. It wasn't a smooth ride nor was it lacking in its thrills as the truck became bogged down in muskeg, was pulled through with the aid of a jeep and then jolted its way across open fields to where huge caterpillar tractors were doing a fancy team-work job in piling debris from new clearing.

But there wasn't a murmur of complaint by our party because what we saw made up for the small inconveniences we may have suffered in our jolting ride aboard the truck.

Pulverize Brush

We saw huge machinery used in literally pulverizing dense stands of brush and trees which formerly



Crest worn by the workmen.

had covered hundreds of acres in this rich grain-growing district. There were huge disc plows at a cost of \$6,500 each, soil splitters weighing 23 tons, and of course the powerful brush cutters and pilers.

Our party saw the great debris pilers tear and rip their way over wild ground which soon will pour hundreds of more bushels of grain into the country's bread basket.

It was a tricky effort of team work by the skimmers of the three large caterpillar tractors.

The pilers were rigged up with special appliances thought up by the tall, thin and silver-haired man behind the great part of the 140,000-acre clearing project — O. B. Lassiter.

4 Outfits Clearing

Driven by trained operators, the tractors swept over a section of land three abreast. They pushed everything before them into huge piles and the way the men manoeuvred these cats was something the Edmonton white-collar workers marvelled at.

This huge land-clearing job is being done under provincial government supervision by four contractors, Lassiter Ltd. being the major operator. Besides Lassiter Ltd., contracting to do 100,000



Brushing and piling on the Project.

acres, three other outfits, Soronson, Johnson and Mix will break up 35,00 acres, 960 and 6,400 acres, respectively.

The land is being broken up for veterans of the Second Great War. Veterans taking lease of the land with ownership their ultimate goal, will get a half-section of land, the majority of it cleared, broken and cultivated to a perfect seed bed.

This land will be leased to the veteran who will repay one-third of his crop each year for seven years until his debt to the government is cleared off. Veterans who have not bitten into their full allotted credits may use this money for a cash payment and take the land outright.



Brushcutter built at Lassiter's. The front end protruded further ahead than usual - another of O.B. Lassiter's innovations.

We were given complete information on the Lassiter project and what it means to this district by members of the board of trade here. The board is headed by A. O. Frimrit with Emil Sather the vice-president.

E. H. Prevost is the secretary and L. A. Lerieger and E. J. Harrington other executive members.

Adds To District

These board members told us how the project has added thousands of acres to this district's growing potentialities. There are 25,000 acres in the district under cultivation at the present time and the Lassiter project will increase the tilled acreage here to more than 40,000 acres within a short time.

Details of the equipment used in this land-breaking job were shown to the visiting Edmontonians.

There were disc-plows which weighed eight tons. They require hundreds of horse power in diesel tractors to pull them through the virgin land. Mr. Lassiter's own personal brain child—the soil splitter—is another tremendous piece of machinery used in this project. It bristles with knives. Another, the Lassiter slicer is 18 feet long, has a

Nearing Completion

It is a tremendous task but one which appears to be well on its way to completion. O. A. Elhorn, a former South Edmonton resident is the foreman on the job while Lassiter and Stan Carter, a provincial government employee, also take an active part in turning this former wilderness into a rich agricultural section.

To say that the residents of the town of Wanham are proud of the work being done on the project would be stating it mildly.



The first plough used on the Project. It was a 7 bottom disc plough - an idea of O.B. Lassiter's.



2 "cats" were needed to pull the ploughs due to the topography of the land being broken.



Al Elhorn up on a device for lifting that was fastened on the yoke.

case-hardened knife which cuts 15 inches deep.

An important job is done by these products of Mr. Lassiter's ingenuity. When their work is done, the veteran has acres of land ready for the seed drill.

Want New Bridge

We were welcomed officially at Wanham by President Frimrit who told us its industry includes, besides farming, a pulpwood business handling more than 3,000 cords yearly.

A bridge at Watino is among the board's development objectives. This bridge would span the Smoky River. They also told us of their water saving efforts and revealed that practically every farm in the district has its own individual dam.

H. E. Pearson, vice-president of the Edmonton chamber, complimented the Wanham district for its progressiveness and had special praise for Mr. Lassiter and his workers.

Mr. Pearson said "while we cannot pledge our support to every wish of areas through the Peace River country, we want to get together with all of you and try to help

settle your collective problems through one concentrated effort.

O. fnerLosT

O. L. Tofner, of Peoria district, who represented the old-timers of this district, urged that a road be built through this district—the shortest route—to Alaska.



Shorty Dakus (Welder) and Harry Kuchiniuk (Blacksmith) standing beside a root rake made by Harry and Al Elhorn. The teeth were made of the top part of railroad rails.

cash to show good faith. The Treasury Branches were financing the project. It was a big undertaking. Equipment was scarce and the contractor had to bring in machines from as far away as the Aleutians. It was also found that special machinery had to be designed to handle the job and much of this was very costly, - for example the first heavy duty plowing machine cost \$15,000 to build. But as the new type machines were put into operation, it was found that they could shear off trees, pulverize and bury roots and turn forests into farm lands in an amazingly short period of time.

In addition a road had to be built to the project and a dam had to be constructed. There was also difficulty with areas of muskeg. However, these preliminary problems were solved and apparently a good job was being made of the breaking and clearing, - at least experts from other Provinces, from Australia, Denmark and the United States who visited the project have praised it highly, even to the point of urging the adoption of similar methods.

As the summer progressed the farm areas began taking shape. Finally the Province advertised that 35 half section farms were to be allotted to veterans, - and finally the allotment was made, 35 veterans were to be able to get in



The second plough - a 5 bottom one that was more satisfactory on hilly land.

BROADCAST BY STAN RUSS ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4, 1947

Last summer the Alberta Government was very proud of its plan for having 100,000 acres of northern land broken for farming under a system whereby veterans could secure title to the property by simply paying one-third share of the crops for seven years. It was a good idea.

In January, operations commenced with Lassiter's Ltd. contracting to do the work after putting up \$100,000



The "shop" on the project across the Burnt River. It held 2 "cats" and the welding equipment.

crops next spring on this new settlement.

Then suddenly last week, the whole project closed down. It appears that the Government refused to finance the project any farther and the shut down came so suddenly that the workers on the project haven't even received their recent wages. In addition, the final preparation of those veteran farms for seeding hasn't been completed and unless it is completed, those men won't be able to get in a crop next year. Yet in spite of this blow to Alberta farm development we have received no explanation from the Government as to why the project which it publicized so freely is being allowed to fold up.

It may be that the Government is shy about spending any more money. Yet why precipitate matters after so much preliminary spending has been done and before returns from the investment are possible. For example, Lassiter has already put in \$100,000 of his own money and the Treasury Branches have advanced about \$500,000 more, - which of course is a large sum. But if the matter stops here it means that 11,000 acres of land have cost almost \$600,000. That is because of all the preliminary expense. The machinery for the project has cost over \$350,000. Road and dam construction has



The Lassiter Bridge - 1952.

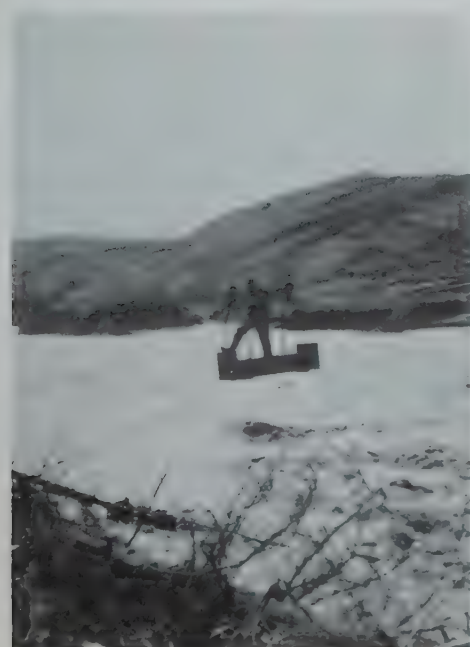
taken another \$16,000. Money had been spent in establishing camps. Yet of the land cleared and broken the average cost has been around \$21.00 per acre, which appears to be quite a conservative expense. The point is that having spent about \$400,000 in preliminary costs, - there is everything to gain if the project continues, - and everything to lose if it doesn't. There is even more to it than that because if the project continues until next year it means that return will be starting to come in and if more and more land is broken until the 100,000 acres are ready it will mean that the province will not only be securing the advantage of getting a new farming section opened up, - but will be receiving back more and more of the money invested. Then why hold up the whole project just at the point where it has reached the highest overhead and just short of it becoming successful.

If it had been shut down last spring there might have been some reason, - but why after advancing all the big capital expenditures, should it be shut down at the time when production is becoming less costly - and just before returns are ready to come in. That is the question which the Government should answer.

It might appear that the idea of spending over half a million was worrying the department, - yet that can't be true. Half a million had already been spent on a tar sand experiment that still has no assurance of providing any returns at all. That money could well be a total loss. Yet it is understood that further advances are to be made for it. Then, if the Government isn't afraid of the cost of a



The crossing on the Burnt River north of Wanham. A "cat" had to clear rocks out of the crossing every 2 or 3 days.



Spring 1947 - The Bucket - the only means of crossing the Burnt River during spring runoff. Mrs. Haley crossed the river in the middle of the night when the river was running high. It was located just east of the present bridge.



Doug Campbell and a bear that came into camp.



Gordon Brown

project which can be a total loss, - why should it be worried about a project that is certain to provide a return on the investment and probably a handsome profit as well, - and why should the department allow matters to run to the point where workers are left stranded with unpaid wages. After all the people of Alberta have an interest in this matter and are entitled to an explanation because some solution must be found. This province must get that land developed and if the province isn't ready to do that, possibly some of the grain companies should take it up because the development of farm and farm products and the placing of returned veterans is vital to Alberta. Its something we can't afford to let drop.



Picnic at the Lassiter Bridge Campsite.

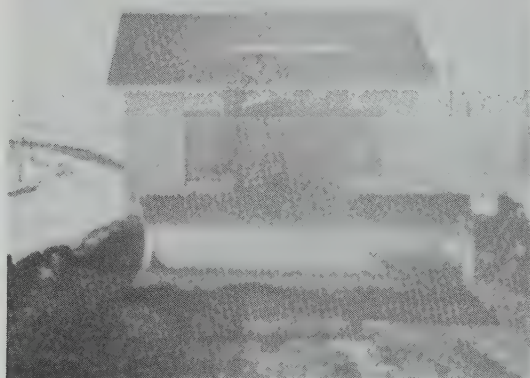


*Barney Archer
Assistant fore-
man and later a
foreman on the
Project.*



Back Row, Left to Right: Solveig Hansen, Faye Moore, Lottie Johnston, Dot Crocker, Dot McNamee, Kay McGinnis, Mrs. Desharnais. Front Row: Sophie Futo, Lou Gingrich, Mrs. Green, Marny Hill and Mrs. Seeley.

*The Haley
House - First
one to cross the
Burnt River.*



Earl Gingrich beside the fuel truck.



*Wedding Party
for the Riegers
in Lassiter
School - 1956.*



Fred Robinson beside the "shop".

THE VETERANS' LAND ACT—APPLICATION FOR QUALIFICATION

Counter or Mail Application..... R.O. CALGARY..... R.O. File 2953

Date Received..... D.O..... D.O. File.....

The Veterans' Land Act provides that assistance may be granted to qualified veterans: (a) to engage in farming as a full time occupation, or (b) to obtain small holdings with dwellings, income to be derived mainly from industrial or other occupation, or (c) to obtain small holdings with dwellings, income to be derived mainly from commercial fishing, or (d) for establishment on Provincial Land. Certified copy of Discharge Certificate or other proof of service, must accompany applications. If service was in Western Hemisphere only, please forward War Service Gratuity statement also if available, in order to avoid delay in determining eligibility. This will be returned. READ CAREFULLY AND COMPLETE FULLY.

To be completed and returned to the Director, Veterans' Land Act at

I desire assistance to become established (a) As full time farmer ☒ (c) As commercial fisherman ☐
(b) As small holder ☐ (d) On Provincial land ☐
(Indicate type of establishment desired by X)

Name in full Henry James Rieger Rank and Official No Pte (L/Cpl) M 28866

Address Box 201 Delia Alberta
(Street) (City or Town) (Province)

Service and Pre-War Domicile

I enlisted in R.C.O.C. at Drumheller on 18 Mar. 1939, or
(Unit and Service) (Place) (Date)

I served as a merchant seaman from to

My address at time of enlistment was Delia Alberta

I served in England and N.W. Europe
(Country and date, or name of ship)

and was discharged at Calgary on 6 Dec. 1946
(Place) (Date)

Are you in receipt of a pension? NO Pension No.
(yes or no) (From what country)

If served in World War 1, give Regimental No. Nil

Particulars of Self and Family

Age 28 Place of Birth N Delia Alberta Racial Origin Canadian

Are you a British subject? Yes Born or naturalized? YES

Married, Widower, Single, Divorced, Separated Single Number of children: Boys Ages

Girls Ages

Wife's Name Age

Place of birth of wife Date of marriage

Have you other dependents? NO If so, state relationship
(yes or no)

State of health of dependents (including wife and children)

Have you a disability? NO If so, give particulars
(yes or no)

Occupation

What work were you engaged in at time of enlistment? Farming

31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28 <i>W. Jennings</i>	27 <i>L. B. Longwood</i>	26 <i>a. w. Green</i>	25
19	20 <i>a. J. Jennings</i> <i>R. H. Green</i>	21 <i>W. R. Haley</i> <i>F. Bosworth</i>	22 <i>S. B. Lenton</i>	23 <i>a. w. Conall</i>	24 <i>R. R. Morgan</i> <i>J. H. A. Pennington</i>
18 <i>W. E. Curtis</i> <i>S. L. Bosonworth</i>	17 <i>E. W. Hingrich</i> <i>A. M. Cosford</i>	16	15	14	13
7 <i>H. J. Pagen</i> <i>D. W. Palmer</i>	8 <i>W. H. LeMaynard</i> <i>B. O. Kugh</i>	9 <i>C. A. Wagon</i> <i>J. F. Mabury</i>	10	11	12
6	5	4	3	2	1

SOUTH

TOWNSHIP 78 RANGE 3 WEST OF 6 TH MERIDIAN

NORTH

31	32	33	34	35 W H Bennett	36 W H Middleton
30	29	28	27 H. H. H. H. H.	26 B H Archer	25 P. H. H. H. H.
19	20	21 Richard H. H.	22 C. H. H.	23 Milton Metz Timothy Metz	24 W. H. H.
18 Peta Whelan	17	16	15 Mary Long	14 Leonard Metz	13 H. H. H.
7 Bernard Smith	8 Carl Reletz Wm. Puter	9 Robt. Metz C. Lanport	10 Mrs F Metz M. H. H.	11 J. J. Podrugny D. M. H.	12 H. H. H.
6 D. H. H.	5 M. H. H. Murphy Reletz	4 L. H. H.	3 R. H. H.	2 Cliff H. H.	1 Laura H. H.

SOUTH

Moore

TOWNSHIP 79 RANGE 2 WEST OF 6 TH MERIDIAN

NORTH

WEST

EAST

31	32	L. Erickson 33 Dunkle Erickson	M. J. Hunt 34 H. M. Hunt	H. L. Hunt 35	36
30	29	28 Hansen	27 Moore	a. F. Watson 26	25
J. A. Johnston 19 M. L. Crocker	C. B. Mills 20	* J. C. Kennedy 21	Ray Hunt 22	23	24
18	17	16	15	14	13
7	8	9 a. Hookney.	10	11 W. L. Ballis C. K. Bithan	I. Madsen 12
P. L. Klebner 6 L. V. Hayward	M. B. Fuller 5	C. A. Pollard 4	R. A. Keller 3 H. Roberts	F. J. Kearney 2 E. E. Ross	E. L. Domeis 1

SOUTH

Pioneer Health and Nurses



Nurses house on the hill - built by the community -
used from 1925-1950.

DISTRICT NURSES

by Vi Wilde

It was in 1923 that a need for a district nurse was discussed among the homesteaders of Wanham and surrounding districts.

A letter, which was received from the Department of Health by Mr. Caveness, led to the decision to do something about it. Thus it began; I quote:

"Nurses Meeting: April 17, 1924

Mr. George MacDonald, Chairman

Mrs. M.R. Murray, Secretary

Mr. MacDonald took the chair at 8:45 p.m. and read the letter received by Mr. Caveness from the Department of Health in 1923.

Questions were then asked by Mrs. Murphy, Geller, Mortenson, Campbell and others on various matters relating to the nurse's salary, mode to be employed for raising the required means of housing, furnishing and so on.

A written vote was then taken and 18 voted in favour of the scheme and 14 undecided. The vote was therefore carried.

Mr. MacDonald was asked to prepare an estimate for a three-roomed lumber house 18 by 20 feet. They were then asked to nominate a temporary committee of three to look into this matter. Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Pete Tansem and Mr. John Murray were elected.

The meeting closed at 11:00 p.m. after the minutes had been read and adopted."

On June 7, 1924, the second meeting of the organization was held. I quote, "Eighteen members from Wanham were present. No representative from Belloy or Heart Valley were there, though they were asked to attend."

Mr. L. Tansem moved that a subscription list be opened to which subscribers be asked to promise contributions to be called upon when needed. This was seconded by Mr. D. Wells and carried.



First nurse's residence at Wanham.

MISS BRIGHTY

On October 8, 1924, another important meeting was held. At this meeting George MacDonald introduced Miss Brighty, whom the Department of Health had sent

to make a report upon the conditions and the needs of Wanham and district.

Miss Brighty gave an interesting and informative talk on the duties of a district nurse; also, she told what was expected of the people whom she came to serve.

A location between the South Slope School and at the foot of Birch Hills was discussed for a possible location for the nurse's home. Mr. Pete Tansem offered a spot on his quarter of land which was readily accepted. The Eli Barrett house was accepted as a temporary residence for the nurse.

On November 10, 1924, another meeting was held as it had been found that a lack of water on the site decided upon for the nurse's house would make it necessary to find another location.

It was in the summer of 1925 that a final decision was made. The house would be built on the Art Ramsfield land, a short distance north of the South Slope School.

This house served as home for the district nurse, whoever she happened to be, until 1950. It was too bad it had to burn in later years while being used as a private residence. It would have made a fitting memento to those courageous women who helped so much to settle this country.

MISS BRIGHTY MOVES IN

It was in December of 1924, a bitterly cold winter, that Kate Brighty moved into Eli Barrett's shack as Wanham's first district nurse.

Under the name of Kate Brighty Colley (her married name), Miss Brighty wrote a book entitled "While Rivers Flow" in which she tells of some of the things that happened to her while she was here. She tells of coming from Edmonton on the, then recently built, Northern Alberta Railroad and suggests that that ride was the forerunner of the classic rock and roll dance craze. Anyone having ever ridden on the old N.A.R. certainly would agree with her wholeheartedly! She tells also of living in, as it was called then, "Barretts Shack", a one room log house, deserted, as the story goes, by one Eli Barrett who spotted a policeman about to pay him a visit. It seems that Mr. Barrett's business of providing "the cup that cheers" was frowned upon by the "boys in blue".

This house was home to Miss Brighty and a lady friend of hers until the nurse's residence on the hill was ready. Despite the fact that there was no electricity, outside plumbing and no water, except the snow hauled in and melted on a wood stove, Kate never complained. She did remark though that it was quite a surprise to find at the bottom of the tub, after the snow melted, what the rabbits had left behind. The hardships she and many other district nurses must have endured, she mentions only casually.

One of her first calls came from the Bad Heart district about ten or twelve miles south of Wanham, where there was a man with a broken wrist and further on, a maternity case.

It was a terribly cold day so Miss Brighty and her friend put warmed rocks on the floor of the cutter, to which they had hitched a horse and after wrapping

themselves in warm rugs, they started off. The trail they took was surrounded on either side by dense bush. Once they were startled to see a lynx jump from one side of the road to the other right in front of them. All went well until they tried to climb the steep incline leading up from the Bad Heart Creek. It was just too much for the harness which parted from the horse! The cutter, loose from its mooring with the rocks all sliding to one side, turned over dumping the two passengers into the deep snow.

To quote Kate Brighty, "our trusty steed walked on a few paces, then stopped and turned to us with a 'what now'? expression on his face". With not a house in sight, the women were on their own. So with an assortment of bits and pieces from their person, which included a belt, shoe laces and some tape from her medical bag, they repaired the harness well enough to carry on. Despite being terribly cold, they arrived in time to bring into the world a bouncing baby boy, and to set the man's broken wrist.

That night they stayed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. McLean, whose daughters danced the highland fling for them. What a lovely ending to a miserable day!

In 1925 Miss Brighty became the first district nurse to move into the new nurse's residence on the hill. Naturally, since this residence was used for over twenty-



Joe Hauser, Mrs. Cole (Dist. Nurse), Elizabeth Hauser and Clara, 1929-30.

five years as "the district nurses home", many dedicated young women occupied it. Some of these young women married local men and stayed here as housewives and mothers. Others moved on and, as so much time has passed, their whereabouts are unknown.

Following Miss Brighty came Miss Conroy, Miss Smith and Mrs. Katherine Cole, all of whom we have lost track of. Next came Miss Girling, who married one of our young homesteaders, Norman MacDonald. They lived south of Wanham for many years. Upon retirement, they moved to Grande Prairie where Mrs. MacDonald passed away. Her husband, Norman, is also dead now.

Miss Florence Tefor arrived here in 1936 to take Mrs. MacDonald's place. After nursing for a little over a year she married her neighbour, Mr. Andrew Ramsfield, who worked on the railroad. After their marriage they ran a store in Belloy, then moved to Victoria B.C., where Mrs. Ramsfield still lives.

Then came Miss Pickup from (to quote her), "Bonny Old England". Not only was she a registered nurse but was trained as a mid-wife as well. That was surely to her advantage as those were the days of large families.

Many of the young women who were sent here as district nurses found maternity cases to be one of their most frightening experiences. Their hospital training only taught them to assist a doctor during a birth. Here they were on their own.

Miss Pickup seemed to have training in many fields. As a nature lover she knew how to live off the land. Her greatest pleasure was to go on hikes through the bush and, as she used to say, "eat off the land".

A friend of hers tells of going on these walks with her in the woods, and what he, a "born-in-the-country boy" himself, learned of living off the land from her.

One day they planned an eight mile hike and he mentioned that they should probably take along some sandwiches. She quickly informed him that when she went on a hike she expected nature to provide her food. He, being a gentleman, didn't argue with her but to himself he thought, "Lady you have a lot to learn, but by gosh, I'm not going hungry. I'll slip a few sandwiches in my pack sack".

As they walked, Miss Pickup pointed out all the different edible fruits growing in abundance and the partridge and rabbits they disturbed as they passed. That, she said, would be their dinner. Chicken or rabbit for dinner when they hadn't brought a gun? Impossible! Soon Miss Pickup decided it was dinner time. Stopping by a small slough where they had noticed partridge in the trees, she removed a shoe lace from one of her shoes, broke a branch off a tree, tied the lace to it forming a noose. "Now, make a noise like a partridge", she instructed her companion Andy. This she explained was to keep the partridge's attention away from her. Andy wasn't quite sure what a partridge sounded like but he started "clucking" as best he could. Suddenly he heard fluttering noises and saw partridges flying in every direction. "So much for our partridge dinner", thought our "doubting Thomas". "Thank gosh for my sandwiches." Just then from out of the bushes, smiling broadly and carrying her partridge, loomed Miss Pickup. "Get some mud", she directed, "while I start a fire". Having bled the bird by cutting a slit inside the beak she proceeded to cover the whole bird with mud. When the fire had died down and only coals remained she placed the ball of mud in the burning embers.

The next hour was spent picking berries for dessert. By this time their main dish was cooked to perfection. Deftly removing the caked mud to which the feathers clung and removing the now shrunken in'ards, a beautifully clean bird emerged.

"That was the best partridge I've ever eaten in my life", insists Andy to this day.

On another occasion they ate a rabbit snared by Miss Pickup—this time by using a wire snare placed across a "rabbit run". This she skinned without the use of a knife. It was then cleaned, washed, wrapped in foil paper, then cooked in the coals of a camp fire. In an emergency she could start a fire by rubbing two sticks together. However, when she planned on having a meal



Miss Grant and Ruth Harrington - 1937.

out she always carried matches. When she was asked where she learned her "live off the land skills", she explained that as a girl in England she belonged to the Girl Guides. Besides that, she would quickly add, "The schools in England taught sensible things, not the nonsense taught in Canadian schools".

As far as anyone knows, Miss Pickup returned to England after she left here.

In 1934 Miss Helen Faulks took over Miss Pickup's position. Like so many of our district nurses, Miss Faulks succumbed to the charms of one of our local romeos. In this case it was Edwin Harrington. They were married in 1934 and lived here for many years.

Mrs. Harrington has her story in our book so except for saying a heartfelt, "Thank you, Helen, for being such a dedicated nurse and a good and true friend to everyone", I will let our readers read her story.

Miss Grant took Mrs. Harrington's place, and after nursing for a short time, she too married a local man, Mr. Merv Hill. Her story is also to be found in this book.

Mrs. Murphy took Mrs. Hill's place, and after nursing here for a short time, went to Edmonton where she nursed for many years. Upon retirement she moved to Texas, where she still lives.

I might mention that it was during Mrs. Murphy's stay here that the nurse's salary was raised to \$75.00 a month! This was in 1939. Our first nurses earned \$50.00 per month.

In December of 1940, upon Mrs. Murphy's resignation, a Mrs. Morrison was hired. It was decided that she would be paid \$60.00 per month and one half of the money collected from her patients. This was a precarious arrangement for the nurse as, at that time, times were really hard and many people simply could not afford to pay.

Many nurses can tell stories of people bringing them meat, (mostly moose meat), eggs, butter and vegetables, in lieu of money. These things were appreciated but without any means of storage, such as deep-freezes or even basements, most of it had to be passed on or it simply went to waste.

A Mrs. Hartubine followed Mrs. Morrison's resignation in 1942. In January of 1943 Mrs. Hartubine resigned to be followed by Miss Shearer. She was hired at the magnificent salary of \$100.00 per month! She stayed until March, 1944. A Miss Barbara Wilson was hired next, but stayed only two months. Mrs. Manson and her two sons moved into the nurse's house next.

To be a district nurse on call twenty-four hours a day must have been a hard job in itself, but to do that, and raise two boys that are full of life, only goes to show you what kind of stuff this amazing woman was made of. In 1944 Mrs. Manson resigned and, with her two boys, moved to Kamloops, B.C., where she and one of her sons passed away.

From 1944 to 1949 no nurse stayed for any length of time. Among those who came and went during that time were: Mrs. Carson, Mrs. Seagrave, Miss Buchanan and Mrs. Haggstrom.

During this time Mrs. Harrington often filled in the gaps. It was not easy for her. By this time she was a mother of four daughters.

In October of 1949, Miss Marion Wainio's application as district nurse for Wanham was accepted. One year later Miss Wainio tendered her resignation as she was getting married. Once again our district nurse married a local man, Mr. Paul Leriger. They now live in Westlock, Alberta.

Mrs. Boeske came next but only on a temporary basis. Once again Helen Harrington filled in.

It was on September 10, 1952, that Miss Audrey Fysh arrived here as district nurse.

By this time a new nurse's residence had been built in the village. Audrey says she still remembers entering her new home and thinking, "My, this is a nice cosy little place". Then, as the people who had brought her left, she thought, "My God, I'm all alone. If anyone raps on that front door I'll faint". However, when the first patient rapped, her courage had returned and for four years she continued to answer those calls for help.

In July of 1956, Miss Fysh resigned to marry Lawrence Laughy. She and her husband still live here, though Audrey is now matron of the Spirit River Hospital.

Once again Helen Harrington was called into service, this time as a part time district nurse. Part time? In a report she gave in 1958 to the Wanham Municipal Nursing Service Society she had answered 1,656 calls. That is part time?

It was not until 1974 that the Wanham Nursing Society received a letter of resignation from Helen stating that due to Ed's ill health she would be unable to carry on as district nurse. Her resignation was accepted with great sorrow.

Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Lena Bush, Secretary-treasurer of the Wanham Municipal Nursing Society received a letter reading in part:

Dear Mrs. Bush,

We have just received word from the Minister indicating that decision has been made to close the nursing station, now that Mrs. Harrington has resigned.

(Signed,) Yours sincerely
Mrs. J.C. Bailey
Director of Public Health Nursing

Those few words closed the chapter on fifty years of service by brave women. Pioneers, every one of them.

OCTOBER 5, 1933

HOSPITAL BOARD DEALS WITH MANY MATTERS

Routine business took up the major portion of the time of the meeting of the Hospital Board held in the dining room of the hospital Saturday last.

Following lunch, Dr. Johnstone of Wanham, addressed the members in order to get their opinion on the advisability of appointing a lady doctor at Wanham.

The general opinion of the board was that a lady doctor should be placed in the district.

It was decided, however, not to take any action until the whole question was taken up with the department.

Up to a few months ago the district nurse was removed from Wanham on the grounds of economy.



Dr. Emma Mary Johnstone

DOCTOR EMMA MARY JOHNSTONE

by Shirley Hunter of the Journal

When Dr. Emma Mary Johnstone and I first met, more than 40 years ago, she told me in a crisp British accent I had chicken-pox and mustn't go to school for a fortnight.

Then she tucked the patchwork quilt up to my chin, and was gone again on the jolting three-mile wagon trip back over dirt roads through the Peace River country bush between our homestead and her tiny cottage near Wanham.

The doughty little Englishwoman came to Canada in 1927 to serve as a northern Alberta District doctor among the pioneer settlers at Jarvie, then Wanham, and later at

Wandering River.

On foot or on horseback, by buggy, wagon, cutter or sleigh - whatever was available - she travelled mile after weary mile under gruelling conditions to reach the sick, injured, pregnant or dying.

In summer, clouds of mosquitoes arose, whining for blood, out of the bush. The thermometer often dipped to bone-freezing temperatures of more than 45 degrees below zero, in winter.

But this week during an interview with Dr. Johnstone, now 95, I learned she felt pioneering in northern Alberta was a breeze compared to the obstacle-strewn path she already had travelled to qualify to practice as a doctor.

HAPPIEST YEARS

"The happiest years of my life have been here, as a doctor, in Canada," she said. "But I've only realized quite lately that they meant something to quite a lot of people."

Her room at St. Joseph's Hospital, where she lives since her eyesight failed, is full of bouquets from friends marking her recent birthday.

Still keen and alert, she finds her blindness "a bore" since she no longer can read medical journals.

She knew from early childhood she wanted to be a doctor "because I've always loved all creatures, except insects".

But Dr. Johnstone, a staunch Anglican who attends both Anglican and Roman Catholic services at St. Joseph's, says she might not have found courage to persist and endure, had it not been for her strong Christian faith.

I told her I remembered our first meeting because, when I asked her what a "fortnight" was, she answered without condescension, as if I were an adult. And that's a response as treasured by a child as a sudden gift.

"I am sure people tend to under-value the intelligence of very small children," said Dr. Johnstone.

PARENTS DIED

Born in India, the daughter of a British Army major-general, she lost her mother when she was five years old.

She clearly remembers her dying mother's request that she "be a good girl and take care of your father; and never do a thing because it's nice or because you like it, but because it's right."

But her father died before she was 15. Dr. Johnstone lived with an aunt in England whom she says, with typical restraint, was "what you might call backward."

Although Dr. Johnstone came from a long line of physicians on the paternal side - her grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather were doctors - her announcement that she wished to study medicine was greeted with dismay.

"My aunt thought it was terrible. She told all her friends, 'Mary wants to be a doctor,' and none of them could understand how any girl would want to behave in that unladylike way."

But the young Mary Johnstone, who had a small income of her own, persisted, despite the fact she was



Dr. Johnstone, Mr. Leriger and Rev. Kitney - 1933.

refused admission by one medical school after another.

"I was told parents wouldn't send their sons to medical schools which accepted women."

FEW OPENINGS

Finally she went to the London School of Medicine for Women at the Royal Free Hospital, graduated in 1910, and went on to work as a clinical assistant in a mental hospital in Edinburgh.

In the late 1920s, her health again almost broken from years of serving in mental hospitals, she was told she must quit work. Instead, she answered an advertisement in a medical journal, and came to Canada to serve in the then remote area of northern Alberta.

PRAISED NURSES

Dr. Johnstone doesn't say so, but The Journal's files reveal she was as determined a fighter for better medical services including an air ambulance, for the settlers she called "these courageous people who are helping to bring prosperity to all of us," as she had been for her right to become a doctor.

One of the first country district women doctors to work in northern Alberta, in an interview with The Journal in 1938 she paid glowing tribute to the "wonderful" work of Alberta's district nurses, who she said "for 19 years have worked night and day to serve the outlying settlers".

But she said then - and again in a speech before the Women's Canadian Club in 1948 - that human lives were being sacrificed in northern Alberta because of the lack of "flying doctors" and an air ambulance service to administer emergency treatment and transport sufferers to hospitals.

In between, Dr. Mary Johnstone went back to England for the Second World War years. "When the war began, I said, 'they can't keep me out of this one,'" she remembers.

She served as the medical officer in charge of a mobile aid unit in Westminster.

"We were outfitted with everything we needed, in a sort of large trailer, to go to places where people had been bombed out, and to help."

What she doesn't say - but the Journal's files show - is

that she was made a member of the Order of the British Empire, in recognition of her outstanding conduct in the course of her duties in the worst of the air raids.

But after the war she returned to northern Alberta, which she called "the finest country in the world," until her retirement in the 1960s, when she moved to Edmonton.

Dr. Johnstone has watched with approval the growth of the ecumenical movement among churches. English and Anglican, she has numbered among her close friends people of different religions, including my mother, who was a devout Irish Roman Catholic from New Brunswick.

But that sort of happy relationship wasn't the norm between clergymen of the past, she recalls.

"I can remember the time when a minister of one variety of Christian church wouldn't put his foot inside another's church."

She's glad that's ending, and it's high time, says the 95-year-old physician who made no distinctions because of creed, age, race or sex, in her service to the people of northern Alberta.

Dr. Johnstone suffered a fall and sustained a broken jaw, since this story was written. She passed away in Edmonton at St. Joseph's Hospital. She was 95 years old.

APRIL 20, 1933

WANHAM FIGHTING TO RETAIN NURSE'S HOME

At a meeting held in the Wanham Community Hall on April 11, with all districts concerned represented, the matter of the provincial government closing the district nursing home was discussed and it was decided to petition the government to reconsider their decision. It was pointed out in the petition that this district is practically isolated, especially during the winter months, from both doctor and hospital, and even when the roads are open the eastern and southern parts of the district are over 100 miles from the Grande Prairie hospital and over sixty miles from the nearest doctor. And for a district with over 500 children in it, it seems very unfair to the residents here that the government should try to save a few dollars at the expense of the growing generation. There is also a possibility that a nurse here can more than save her expenses by administering to people in their own home. Whereas if there were no nurse here, these people would have to go to the hospital or at least have a doctor from Spirit River and in a great many cases the government would be called upon to foot the bill. In a new district such as this the residents are mostly homesteaders and with the present price of farming commodities are barely able to live.

It was decided that in the event of the government refusing to reconsider their action, that the committee take the matter up with the Grande Prairie Municipal District, of which Wanham is a part, and see if some arrangements could be made to have some service here with the cooperation of the board as it is understood here the reason for losing the nurse is on account of being in the hospital district. The district already owns the nurses' home and is responsible for its upkeep.

The following were appointed as a committee to act and call further meetings when necessary: E.J. Harrington, Chairman; E.H. Prevost, Secretary; O.L. Toftner, Emil Sather and L.J. Wilson.

The Wanham Board of Trade had already taken the matter up with the department and were working in cooperation with Hugh Allen, MLA, who is taking the matter up with Premier Brownlee. The Peoria and West Vale UFA locals have also forwarded petitions and now, with all efforts combined under one committee, results are expected.

MARCH 19, 1936

APPOINT COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH SERVICE ON PAYING BASIS

Annual meeting of the Wanham District Nursing Association was held in the Community Hall on Tuesday, March 10, with a good representative crowd in attendance.

It was learned with regret that the present nurse, Miss Pickup, was leaving the district and had turned in her resignation, to take effect on July 1. It was also learned that Dr. Johnstone was also leaving the district on a holiday and could not say when she would return.

Upon discussing the matter it was learned that the district had not supported the nurse as should have been and that collections were practically nil. After a long debate, during which many suggestions were offered, it was at last decided to appoint a strong committee to take charge of the whole thing and try to put it on a paying basis, either by taxation, if this is found possible, or by higher fees and a more rigid method of collection. The following were appointed to the committee for Wanham central committee, with other committees from the outlying districts to assist them: George MacDonald, Roy Cameron, E.J. Harrington.

It was decided to have this committee report back to a general meeting the first week in June as to their progress, and it will then be decided if it will be possible to support a nurse in the future.

It is to be hoped that the entire community will give the committee full support as it would be a serious thing, situated as this district is, cut off with bad roads about half of the year, to be without a nurse or doctor.



Miss Helen Faulks (Harrington), District nurse and George Munro.

JULY 23, 1936

People from all over the district flocked to Wanham yesterday to take advantage of the travelling clinic. Many children have been examined and quite a few will be operated on today, principally for tonsils.

Excavation has started for the new school; a very good deed. But some think that it is too bad that the school is not being placed in town where they say it will eventually have to come.

EXPERIENCES OF MY TIME AS WANHAM NURSE

by Mrs. Helen M. Harrington

When I went to Wanham as district nurse, I followed in the footsteps of Miss Peckeyes, who was apparently very well experienced, being a midwife along with her other qualifications. This was the opposite to me - very little experience and no orientation. When I landed in the nurses home, I was on duty - right now. I was very lucky to have a wonderful couple for neighbors - Jean and Art Ramsfield.

There are several cases that, even today, stand out in my mind. Not long after I arrived there, a man came in with an axe cut to his ankle - a fair sized gash. What should I do? I'd never done any suturing and I had nothing for anesthesia. Also because of road conditions there was no way to get him to the doctor at Spirit River - 20 miles away. So I told him, "You'll have to just hold tight and I'll give it a try". I had only a large curved needle and it was about 2" in length. My supplies were very limited. But I did sew it up, sort of neatly, and he was able to walk out and somehow it healed very well.

A QUART OF RASPBERRIES

I have always maintained, for gals like me, there was a Guardian Angel. One late night I was called to the country. The roads were terrible and I got there by team at 1:00 a.m. I could hear what I thought was an old sow with her young, grunting away like they do, but when I got to the house it was a mother in a deep eclamptic coma. I'd never seen an eclamptic patient. What shall I do? The only thing I could remember from lectures was, 'give morphine and deliver the baby to save the mother'. It took me almost two hours by coal oil lamp. The baby, full term, had been dead for quite awhile. The mother was eventually taken by team to Belloy, and from there by speeder to the hospital. She survived, and later in the year I was thanked with a quart of raspberries and a note.

Another case was a young woman in hemorrhage. I was driven out on the front bunks of a sleigh - me and my 'Stanley' bag, and a chap went ahead and cut down stumps, to let us pass along to the residence. The patient was on a straw bunk with mice running to and fro along the muddled logs of the cabin. Another case of the Guardian Angel, who saw us through.

Another interesting trip was to a bachelors place, a way out, and at night too. The old dad had a heart attack. But that place was something to behold! There were literally



Mrs. Morrison, (Dist. Nurse) and Helen Harrington.

dozens of cats and cat dung everywhere. In the centre of the room was a huge chopping block where he cut his wood. The things you don't see!

In those days, people were asked for \$1.00 annually to belong to the nursing association, and if they did this they only paid 50¢ for an office call and \$1.00 for a home visit, if they could pay! And they were responsible for the transportation of the nurse both ways. At that time of the year, I asked a young man for his \$1.00 and he said, "Oh, I'll never need the nurse", and he didn't pay. The very next day he was taking a sleigh load of grain to town, and on the Nurses Hill the load slipped sideways and into the ditch and over. He suffered a broken leg. He was grateful then for the nurse to give him a shot of morphine, and get him to hospital.

MY BOY HAS DROWNED

I guess the case of all cases to remember was the 2 1/2 year old boy found in a dugout. It was about 10:00 a.m. Easter Sunday morning. The dad came for me by team, so I told him to go home and be with the mother, and I'd come by car. I tried to find someone but everyone was at church. Eventually I got Albert Leriger - time was slipping by. Well, when we got there the child was cold and clammy, like a dead fish, and no responses. So I started mouth to mouth resuscitation and told Albert to keep the nasal passage clean. Well, poor Albert - his stomach was acting like an oil well blowing, but he managed to control it. The mucous that came from the child's nose was unbelievable. I had problems, too, with my dentures, but I kept on for a good half hour and finally, response! The chest heaved on it's own! But I kept up the mouth-to-mouth all the way to the hospital. As I said, he drowned about 10:00 a.m. and he was found at 10:30. We got there at 11:25 and we got to the hospital at 12:25 noon. This is all actual fact, and I still have the notes I made that day. The lad is a teenager now and goes to a special school. I guess there was brain damage. I still know my Guardian Angel was close that day - how else did that little guy pull through?

SCISSORS IN THE BACK POCKET

Bachelors were often hesitant to go to a young nurse. But there was the mid-aged chap - he had a pair of barber

scissors in his back pocket and for some reason when he sat down the point went right into his buttock and took bits of cloth with it. So when he came in, I had to dig in with forceps to retrieve the bits of cotton and, of course, then force some good ointment in. It healed okay. Now-a-days, it would be deemed necessary to have a tetanus shot and antibiotics.

Also I had a man come in with an abscessed finger. He'd been through the horrors of the war and done his share of bombing, but the minute I touched his finger he went out like a light. One always had to be careful with men, they would faint so easily. Mentioning bachelors, the first nurses cottage I was in was on the top of Nurses Hill - just across the highway. The cottage was in Bachelors Row, so called because there was the nurse, then Eli Barrett and farther on Mike Shannon. One day Eli brought me some bear steaks. No way could I eat them!

There were many minor things to do - like syringing beans out of kids ears, bugs out of eyes and, oh yes, removal of a foreign object from a small girl's vagina. It seemed that men often came in with flash burns to their eyes - because they didn't think goggles were necessary.

Home visits were always gratifying, especially if I could really help the sick person. When the flu was bad, I spent 2 days and 2 nights out in Heart Valley with an elderly lady applying mustard plasters and steam, and giving 292's. We didn't have any form of antibiotics then, so it was straight nursing care.



Lillian Shearer and Helen Harrington.

SHUT THE DOOR

I remember so well a fellow brought in, in a blinding blizzard. He'd had his arm literally ripped off, in a power take-off or something. Unbelievably, there was no bleeding, but the bones stuck out like a broken chicken wing. I opened the car door and he yelled, "Shut the door, I'm freezing". He was in shock and shivering. I gave him blankets and a hot water bottle, a shot of morphine and, would you believe, a good shot of whiskey; then sent him on to the doctor. He survived and later came back to see me. I wasn't too busy that day so I removed his dangling sleeve from his parka and put a

neat patch in the armhole, just so the loose sleeve wouldn't get caught and cause him more trouble.

I could go on about experiences. Several deliveries were made in the home, with very little in the way of conveniences, but we always got by. I was told once, in my second year of training, that I'd never make a nurse and I



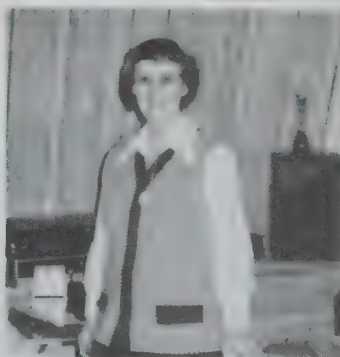
Mrs. Murphy, (Nurse) and Ruth Harrington.



Bill Manson, Mrs. Manson, District nurse 1944-46, Joe Manson.



Dr. Boeske on right with her husband Hans and her mother - 1952.



Audrey (Fysh) Laughy

Right: Ches, Floss (Dist. Nurse) and Jerry Hagstrom.



Lower: Before the hunting trip: Audrey Weldon, Mrs. Manson, Doris Tansem, Maggie Ungstad, Bill Manson.



'Nurse of the Month'

Mrs. Audrey Laughy, nee Fysh, is Director of Nursing of the Central Peace General Hospital in Spirit River, Alberta. As Director of Nursing, she strives to keep in touch with the changes in the profession and to promote an environment where her staff can grow and find satisfaction in their everyday work, thereby giving the best possible care to the patients.

A graduate of the University of Alberta, Audrey Laughy has nursed in the North District except for the three years she served as School Nurse with the Edmonton Public School Board. In 1952, she came north to Wanham under the District Nursing Service where she remained for four years prior to resigning to be married. She returned to general duty nursing at the Holy Cross Hospital, Spirit River in 1960 and assumed the Director of Nursing position in 1970—a position she retained in the new facility renamed Central Peace General Hospital.

Mrs. Laughy has been active with the local A.A.R.N. Chapter for many years holding both Secretary and President positions. She also was a member of the North District Executive for several years.

Her family consists of one adopted daughter, two foster daughters and four grandchildren. Outside interests include reading, music, travel and people.

ought to quit. This was because I carried a hot water bottle in my hand, instead of on a tray. The supervisors were very strict. However, I'm glad I got my R.N. and had so much experience in Wanham. Maybe I had a bit of a record there, having served the most number of years and being the last municipal nurse to serve there.

Curling was my favorite sport and several times as skip, we did quite well. I can't recall the year, but Mrs. Lena Blonski, Caroline Wiegel and Florence Sather went with me to Grande Prairie. We had a lot of fun and we *curled*, not *bonspieled*!! Another year, Eve Ireland went instead of Florence. We won 8 out of 10 games. I always enjoyed curling with Stu Bennett - he was a real good sport. I started curling in the first old curling rink.

MY LIFE AS A DISTRICT NURSE

by Audrey (Fysh) Laughy

September 25, 1952, was a beautiful fall day and the beginning of a new way of life for me. I had accepted a position with the Alberta Department of Public Health as a District Nurse at Wanham and had just spent three days with a nurse at Tangent to become acquainted with my duties. The first part of my trip on the famous N.A.R. train had brought me from Edmonton to Tangent and, on this particular day, my journey was completed when we travelled by car to Wanham. We were expected and accompanied to the nurse's cottage. Then everyone left. I will never forget my flood of feelings as I stood in the middle of the living room: excited - by the challenge of my new work; anxious - that I would measure up to the challenge; and completely alone, as I had never been before in my life, for I knew absolutely no one here.

District Nurses were intended to provide health care to residents of areas isolated from doctors and hospitals and offered both preventative and treatment services. A cottage for the nurse, which had both living quarters and office space, was the responsibility of the community with an elected committee to maintain the house and grounds and negotiate with the Department.

The furnishings, dishes and linens were supplied by the Department, as were the drugs and medical supplies. All ordering, accounting, and inventory procedures for supplies and money collections were the responsibility of the nurse. Fees were minimal for drugs, sick calls, accidents and deliveries. There were no charges for preventative services such as well baby clinics, school visits and immunizations.

Transportation was an important item. Cars and trucks had replaced horses and buggies and roads were receiving some gravel which helped during the rainy times. Relatives and friends would come for the nurse whenever there was a need for her services for a delivery, illness or accident. She was on call at all times and would leave a note on the cottage door as to her whereabouts whenever she was absent. For other trips to clinics or schools, the nurse used her own vehicle or rented a car. During my first year, I was fortunate to have the use of a car for my weekly Belloy Clinic trip. On one occasion, however, I used a four-wheel drive jeep. It was quite a different experience as its narrow track caused it to sway

from side to side, in and out of the set of ruts on the side roads. Another time, I had a School Division car to travel to the Eaglesham School. Returning on Highway 49, as I neared Wanham, the right front tie-rod suddenly broke. Fortunately, the car stayed on the road and I managed to turn into a nearby farmyard. The good farmer obligingly attached some wire and after strict instructions not to exceed 10 miles an hour, I made it to the Nurse's Cottage without further trouble. I'd had little driving experience before coming to Wanham but was assured that I would soon learn how to drive anywhere and I have to believe that to be true. In 1953, I bought my first car and it was to be a reliable vehicle for many years.

Having lived all my life in a city up until then, I had a lot to learn and adjust to. One of my first lessons came from a five gallon pail in the cupboard under the sink. As I emptied my dish water into the sink, I felt my feet getting wet! I don't believe I ever forgot to check that pail regularly after that. A short time later, some mice got into the basement; a good enough reason to learn how to set and empty traps. And then there was the temperamental oil heater in the front room. One winter morning I woke early to find the cottage quite chilly. The heater was out and no persuasion on my part could get it going again. One of the Committee members came to nudge it into action but, eventually, it went out again one day while I was away, freezing everything in the house and it had to be replaced by a propane floor furnace. Actually, I soon learned that a small rural community is marvelous. They watch over everyone, are ready to help in any emergency and that made it possible for this city girl to learn the ropes of country living.

The days were always busy. All sterile supplies had to be processed in a big pressure cooker on the kitchen stove and then dried in the oven. White flannel or cotton squares were made to wrap the 4 x 4 gauze dressings, syringes and needles that were sterilized each day. Replacement of the squares was perpetual as they turned brown in the oven and disintegrated after only a few washings. Drug and medical supplies had to be checked and ordered; laundry and cleaning kept up; and records and bookkeeping entries made. There were regular checkup examinations and immunization programs for infants and children with counselling and advice available to the parents. And, of course, the office calls and home visits which could come at any time of the day or night for those who were ill or injured. Most times there was a good feeling because you were able to help others but, occasionally, there were very sad times when a death would affect the whole community.

It was not all work and I was soon welcomed into the social life of the area. I found a great spirit of friendliness and warmth with many shared meals and cups of coffee. There was time for visiting and learning new interests. It was tremendous and it wasn't long until I realized I had found a community of good friends where I could happily settle down for life.



Organizations



"The Hut" - used originally as an Anglican Church at Belloy Corner - then moved to Belloy and used as the Legion Hut.

April 2/20.
MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Moved by L. C. Tansem sec. by H. Mortenson that a Committee be appointed to get in touch with ~~some~~ the proper parties in Bad Heart Dis. in regard to road to Wanham (Com. B. McDonald H. Mortenson O. Tansem)

Moved by L. Cameron seconded by M. Godet that the local be known as the ~~Betty Birchview~~ local in place of Wanham (Carried)

Moved by D. B. Reed sec. by P. Tansem that a vote of thanks be given by tendered to Mr. Har for his splendid service in helping to organize this local and also that we would recommend that any district wishing to form a local should obtain the service of Mr. Har if possible (Carried) ~~unanimously~~ (unanimously)

Moved by H. Haug sec. by D. Cameron that the minutes be adopted

Minutes of the April 2, 1920 meeting of Birchview Local U.F.A. 376.

BIRCH VIEW LOCAL U.F.A. 376

by Sam Parlee

The early settlers held an organizational meeting March 15, 1920 for the purpose of forming a U.F.A. local. Fred Murphy was elected President. Other officers elected were: Vice President - George MacDonald Secretary - A. Campbell

With W. Francis, P. Whalen, A.L. Fortier, O. Tansem, and D. Cameron as directors.

An item of interest at the April 3rd meeting reads as follows: Moved by L. Leriger and Seconded by L.C. Tansem that the secretary get in touch with the president of the E.D. & B.C. Railway re: shelter for Wanham & Belloy sidings with stoves suitable for wood and that a suitable platform be built at both sidings. The motion was carried. At the same meeting a sports committee was appointed namely George MacDonald, W. Trumpower and R. Archibald. At the following meeting a committee was appointed to interview the settlers in the Bad Heart (Heart Valley) about opening a road through the Birch Hills to connect their community with Wanham.

At the June meeting of that same year a motion was made by D. Cameron and seconded by H. Mortenson that the secretary write the U.F.A. local at Waterhole (Fairview) to find out "what is being done about roads". At the March 4, 1921 meeting, held at Barrett's house, the matter of a cream testing station was discussed at some length, with the secretary adding this statement: "The matter left for such action as the interested parties might care to take."

The matter of telephone service was discussed with the secretary instructed to take the matter up with the proper authorities. An item of more consequence was the discussion re: "The pole bridge on Spirit River trail". The meeting closed on a very pleasant note "the secretary promised to try to secure it's reconstruction." Would this have been the crossing on the Burnt River?

The meetings were for the most part well attended and the minute book well kept for a period of six years. In the

rear cover of the book is a list of all the members who bought binder twine through the U.F.A. local for the 1926 harvest. Some bought 100 lbs., others bought less, all the way down to 20 lbs. with a 40 cent down payment. Some paid as high as \$2.00 down. These were the real pioneers who walked the wooded trails to the meetings, lantern in hand after a day of toil. They drew up the resolutions, they pressed for roads and bridges, they built the community hall and school and put two towns on the map and left many pleasant memories in the minds of many people.





WANHAM BOARD OF TRADE

by V. Wilde

On April 15, 1929, a meeting was held in the Wanham Hotel to form a Board of Trade for Wanham.

Elected as President was Ed Prevost; Vice President, Pete Tansem; Secretary-treasurer, Ed Harrington; Executive members, Adolphus St. Pierre, Zak Lamoine, Ed Fortier and Ralph Picard. Other people present at that first meeting were Louis Tansem and G. Ward. There may have been many more at the meeting but only the above were mentioned in the minutes.

Further meetings were to be held every second Monday of each month.

It was decided to extend an invitation to everyone in the Hamlet and surrounding district to join the Board of Trade. Charges to be \$2.50 per year for businessmen and .50¢ for all others. At a later meeting that was changed to read \$6.00 for country and non-businessmen.

In writing about the Board of Trade, I'm not going to try to go into detail of each meeting from 1929 to 1972. I will endeavor to show how hard people had to work to keep even a small Hamlet going.



Left to Right: Wally Tansem, Ed Prevost, John Hall and Harry Beamer.

Most of us moving into a small place like Wanham fail to realize that the place didn't just happen - it had to be planned. Such things as the garbage dump, sports grounds, water supply, streets and avenues all had to be planned.

It was such things as the above and getting sidewalks made and roads built that occupied the early Board of Trade the first few years.

One other thing that arose was trying to get a tri-weekly train service into the Peace River country. The motion read; "Moved by Pete Tansem, seconded by J. Pickard, that secretary write D.C. Coleman requesting tri-weekly service when the E.D. and B.C. has been taken over."

In case anyone does not understand the meaning of the above motion, I will try to explain. When the first railroad came into the Peace River country, it was known as the Edmonton to British Columbia railroad. It was in 1929, I believe, that the name was changed to the Northern Alberta Railroad and it was then the Wanham Board began asking for a station, station agent and tri-weekly service. This was one of the many undertakings of the Board that ended in success.

It took a few years and many meetings with the railroad bigwigs but it did come to pass.

Members of the Board of Trade mentioned by this time in the minutes were: E. Fortier, P. Tansem, R. Pickard, A.D. St. Pierre, L. Tansem, Ed. Harrington, Ed. Prevost, R. Sawyer, J. Pickard, Hermel Girard, A. Glover, F. Girard, C. Lampert and Z. Lamoine.

It was these men that worked so hard to get decent roads in this country. The government, at that time, seemed very reluctant to spend any money in developing this part of the country. They probably felt that if they just ignored this northern wilderness it would just go away. But those hearty pioneers had no idea of playing dead. They were fighters and we have much to thank them for.

It was in 1930 that the Board of Trade contacted the United Grain Growers and Pool Elevator Companies encouraging them to build elevators in Wanham. Thus today we have these facilities and have had for many years.

Roads were of much concern in those early days. Of special interest to the Wanham Board of Trade in 1931 was the South Peace Highway. That is, I believe, now our Highway 49. I am not sure when the road became a reality but probably in 1935 or 1936. It was no highway, of course, but an almost passable road wandering like a snake from Spirit River to Watino. At Watino, once a ferry was in operation, you were on your way to the "outside".

The Board of Trade had acquired a few new members by this time, namely; Mr. Ripley, Cameron and Baker.

I suppose we can not give the Board the credit for opening up roads in the Peace River country but they must have helped.

Another thing they tried to get was cheaper license fees for cars up here in the Peace. They pointed out to the government that in the cities people drove their cars the year around since they had good roads to travel on. Here, for six months of the year, what roads we had were

impassable for a car. That, of course, fell on deaf ears as far as the government was concerned. Funny isn't it that so many members of the Legislature over the years have been deaf!

I note that three new members joined the Board of Trade at the November 23, 1933, meeting. They were Al Fortier, Art Ramsfield and Mr. F. Carpenter. It was at this meeting that a motion was made to contact Mr. Giroux and Hugh Allen regarding South Peace Highway and ask for planking Watino railroad bridge rather than have a ferry there. They also suggested that the government seemed to be dragging their feet on getting the Highway 48 South started. (I would like to suggest here that they are dragging their feet a bit on getting it finished. This is 1981 and think of the condition of the highway near Gordondale and Bonanza!)

As I read the minutes of the Board of Trade I notice the names of L. Leriger and Nels Jacobsen. When they joined I do not know but it was at the April 20, 1934, meeting that their names were first mentioned. I would like to say here that probably many more men belonged to the Board of Trade but unless their names are mentioned in the minutes I have no way of knowing. I apologize most humbly to those whom I have missed.

At the October 5, 1934, meeting the following was mentioned, I quote, "At this meeting it was decided to do as other districts were doing, that is shipping a carload of vegetables to dried out areas. Date for loading, 8th, 9th and 10th, of this month. Anyone having lived in central or southern Alberta during that terrible drought will know how much those vegetables were appreciated.

It was in 1935 and 1936 that the Board of Trade decided to have a sidewalk built from the hotel to the railroad track. The person that seemed to have the most input on the project was Mr. H. Sheedy, a new member. Nels Jacobsen and Clarence Lampert were on the committee to collect money and get volunteer labor to do the job. It might be of interest to mention that they bought cedar lumber delivered from Mr. Metz for \$9.00 a thousand and from Ben Hauser for \$10.00 a thousand. Sounds like a pretty good deal doesn't it? I wonder how many boards \$10.00 would buy today? Very little more was mentioned in the Board of Trade minutes but I understand this sidewalk was built as well as sidewalks in the main part of the Hamlet.

It was on March 22, 1937, that the following letter was sent to the Railroad Company on behalf of the Wanham Board of Trade: I quote "Mr. J. Callagen, Manager. Dear Sir, At our Board of Trade meeting held today I was asked to write you requesting planking for our platform at the railroad station in Wanham.

This station serves many districts and a big business is transacted at the station which surely warrants a better platform than only dirt and cinders. Many passengers board the train at Wanham, lots of grain and livestock shipped out of here, much machinery, groceries, drygoods and hardware comes in. This is a very busy community and a paying proposition for the railroad. We deserve a planked platform.

Another important subject I wasn't asked to write about is the slashing or clearing of the brush on both sides of the railroad track at the crossing five miles west

of the station to make traffic safer for all those crossing the track at that point. Accidents will happen there sooner or later if the view of the track remains obscure.

Hoping to hear from you favorably in the very near future. The Wanham Board of Trade, E.H. Prevost, secretary."

I cannot find any further reference to this project in the Board's minutes but I understand both requests were granted.

The next important matter concerning the Board of Trade was the location of the school. It seemed many people felt there should be a school in the Hamlet rather than so far south where the South Slope School was located. I believe the argument went on for years here but though the name of the school was changed to Wanham School the location is still the same.

It seems the war years brought a halt to all Board meetings from 1938 until April 26, 1946.

Thirteen people attended the reorganization meeting and a new slate of officers were elected namely; President, Ed Harrington, moved by Ed. Prevost, seconded by George Berg. Vice-president, Lawrence Leriger, moved by Hermel Gerard, seconded by George Berg. Secretary-treasurer, Ed Prevost, moved by L. Leriger, seconded by George Berg. Moved by Stewart Bennett, seconded by R. Picard that the following act on the executive committee: John Hall, Carl Blonski, O.A. Prevost and R. Pickard.

Once again the South Peace Highway was discussed, this time trying to get it gravelled. The crossing over the Smoky at Watino was also mentioned. The secretary was instructed to write to Mr. Debolt, M.L.A., and District Engineer, Conners, re: putting in culverts and grading of the new streets and avenues here in Wanham. Graveling and upgrading of road to Peoria was another project the Board worked for.

I notice some new names mentioned in the 1946-1947 minutes namely: Charlie Webber, Emil Sather, Mr. Chilton, Albert Leriger, Mr. A.O. Fimrite, Mr. Joe Hauser, L. Christensen, William Rottacker, O.L. Toftner, and L.O. Toftner.

It was at about this time too that the Board of Trade began writing letters to the government concerning a road north from Wanham to the Lassiter Project. Asking too for a bridge over the Burnt River. It was pointed out to the government that they had not spent a cent on a road or on other conveniences for the new settlers.

Many discussions were held by the Board of Trade concerning the many problems of the Lassiter Project but that subject will be fully covered in a story of the project in another part of our book.

Gosh, all my reading of the Board of Trade minutes has been rewarded! I find the name of a woman! Congratulations Clara Hauser!

In the 1948 minutes the Board decided it was time Wanham have street lights. They discussed this with Pete Tansem who had the power plant at that time. He informed them as to what such a project would cost as follows: Three dollars for each 100 watt light per month, bulbs to be furnished by the Hamlet. Cost of installing street lights, complete with fixtures, wire, poles and labor would be \$30.00 for each street light. I wonder what it



Wanham Board of Trade Banquet with The Edmonton Friendship Train. Wanham Board of Trade members in the picture are: O.L. Toftner, A.O. Fimrite, E.J. Harrington, Ken Waters, Stan Carter, Rev. Miller, Clifford Tansem, L. Leriger, Jim Rutherford, Gus Dopher and Alex Sandercock.

would cost today?

I am going to quote the following from the minutes of the June meeting of 1948, I believe, though no year was mentioned: "The president of the Board of Trade told us that in different locations the Boards of Trade with the help of the old-timers of the district made a history of their place and asked the meeting if the members would be interested in compiling such a history book of our own. It was unanimously agreed to do this. Mr. L. Leriger, being one of the old-timers, was very much in favor and requested we appoint Mr. R. Johnson, Mr. P. Tansem as historians and let his name be chosen also and that this committee of three would engage two more old-timers and the school students. The students would be competing for three prizes. The reason I inserted the above is to point out how many years ago a history of Wanham was thought of. Thirty one years later a group got together and decided to actually do something about it. Hopefully our book will be published in 1981. Boy those old-timers were really smart when they forgot all about writing that book!!

Here I have run into a real roadblock. We cannot find any more Board of Trade minutes until the year 1963. However, from some correspondence I have found I know the Board was active during that time.

It was during this time that the big argument about what route the highway to Edmonton should take.

The following taken from Calgary and Edmonton papers will explain the situation far better than I can. There is also a letter to the Edmonton Journal from the Boards of Trade including Wanham.

The "Friendship Train" it seems was sent up here to visit the Boards of Trade to try to head off the big controversy but it doesn't seem that it was very successful.

Up until the dam was built here in Wanham, water was hauled from a well on the hill south of town. In 1952 land

(400 acres) was bought from Mr. Clarence Lampert for a dugout. I am not sure when this became operational. Water was, of course, still hauled to each household.

In 1952 the Board of Trade finally got the streets levelled and graded. Ken Waters did the work. To pay Mr. Waters for his services, money was collected from local residents. Those donating were: S.E. Carter, A. Kozubak, E.H. Prevost, Harold Peebles, O.A. Prevost, E.J. Harrington, A. Fimrite, John Richter, K. Waters, A. Sandercock, Carl Blonski, H.J. Beamer, Ben Hauser, P. Tansem, G. Dopher, A. Topich, R. Pickard, J. Bilinski, N. Jacobsen and D. Ferris. A total of \$108.00, exactly the amount of Mr. Water's bill, was collected.

Reading the financial statements for 1952 I see there was a fire hall and fire engine in Wanham at that time. It seems the Board of Trade looked after the financial side of this too. Whether they were instrumental in getting the fire hall and engine I do not know.

How can minutes just vanish!!

It seems the Board sponsored picture shows in the hall. They also sponsored the sports days.

I will now refer back to the South Peace Highway which by 1955 was a fairly good road.

It was in 1955 that the bridge over the Smoky River at Watino was completed. The following excerpt taken from the Grande Prairie Herald Tribune will explain something about the bridge. The financial statement from the Wanham Board of Trade will show how much interest our little Hamlet had in this event.

I will add a small personal note here as we were living in Watino at the time. It had rained steadily for over a week prior to this event. No one, unless you were there, could imagine how muddy it was!

I realize that many things happened between 1948 and 1963 and the Board of Trade probably had a great deal to do with it but without minutes I would be guessing.

By 1963 our streets were gravelled, Canadian Utilities



Ladies Who Provided the Banquet for the Friendship Train. Back Row, Left to Right: Helen Harrington, Mrs. Wiegel, Helen Fimrite, Mary Sather, Mrs. Jacobsen, Lillian Jacobsen, Mrs. Pickard, Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Leriger. Front Row: Elaine Harrington, Doris Ayling, Patsy Leriger and Hazel Smith.

were supplying our power, roads to the Lassiter Project, Heart Valley and Peoria had been made very passable. These were just a few things our Board of Trade had fought so hard for.

I am afraid now I have to start referring to the 1963 minutes. The first minutes I have of that year read as follows: A meeting of the Wanham Board of Trade was called to order by the president, James Rutherford at 8:55 p.m., September 24, 1963. Eleven members were present.

No minutes of previous meetings were available. A new executive was installed consisting of George Shea, president; Dennis Wilford, vice-president and Harry Beamer, secretary treasurer. A committee headed by Bill Lewis was asked by the Board to write a letter to the Minister of Highways concerning the deplorable condition of Highway 49. Copies of the letter to be mailed to Spirit River, Rycroft, Belloy, Eaglesham, Tangent, Watino, Girouxville, Donnelly and Falher. Also to A.O. Fimrite, M.L.A.; Alberta Tourist Association and Peace River Tourist Associations.

An answer from Mr. Taylor, Minister of Highways, informed the Board that very little, if any, work would be done this year (1964) but there would probably be something done in 1965.

On August 10 of 1964 a letter was read from Mr. Taylor informing the Board of Trade that a crew would be starting to work on Highway 49 immediately to upgrade the surfacing between Rycroft, Wanham and east. Could pressure from the Board of Trade of the South Peace have caused the change of mind?

E.J. Harrington moved that secretary write a letter of thanks to Mr. Taylor, seconded by Jim Rutherford, carried.

Here I found out something important that had happened during those "minutes missing" days; Wanham had become a Village and there was a Village

council.

Now there were two bodies working hand in hand to try to make Wanham progressive and a nice place to live.

Some of the main concerns of the Board of Trade in those days was getting a new elementary school for Wanham and retention of the nursing services. It seems the government wanted to withdraw the nursing service here.

Sanitation at the school was discussed and a petition was sent to the Department of Education asking for an investigation concerning what the Board of Trade felt was a deplorable state. The department looked into it at once and the situation was righted.

At almost every meeting of the Board something was mentioned about the school.

In another story in our book this subject is covered in detail so I will not dwell upon it here. However, I would like to say that the Board of Trade did a great deal to keep the school in Wanham.

At the May 10, 1965, meeting a discussion was held re: the possibility of the amalgamation of local committees and organizations. Dennis Wilford moved and L. Laughy seconded that a steering committee be set up to call a meeting of representatives of all local bodies such as the Board of Trade, Wanham Hall and Sports Association, Curling Club, Skating Club, Baseball Club, etc., to get their reactions to such a proposal. Motion carried. George Shea offered to chair the committee. (Could this have been the very beginning of C.O.C.O.?)

On July 26, 1965, the Board of Trade sponsored the sports day which netted them \$600.00 which they turned over to the hall and sports committee.

In 1966 Wanham found itself without a cafe as Gaspard Bouchard's restaurant had burned and he had decided not to start up again.

Bill Lewis and the secretary offered to look into getting someone to start a cafe.

Chairman George Shea asked if anything was being done to officially open the new Water Works in the village. It was decided that the Board of Trade would cooperate in any plans the town council had made.

Any of us living in Wanham in 1966 will remember the Christmas tree decorating our main street that Christmas. It was lovely and we can thank our Board for the idea. The lights for the tree were donated by Bill Lewis, Joe Lebeuf, George Shea and Harry Beamer. Fire Chief, William Feniak offered the services of the fire department to erect the tree.

After years of being secretary, Harry Beamer resigned on November 19, 1966.

In 1967 a deal was made with Orest Zahara to supply propane pegged at .16¢ for one year.

Here we go again - a big gap. I will quote; On April 24 a meeting in Wanham hall was held to reactivate the Board of Trade which ceased to be functional in 1968. Thirteen people were present at the meeting. Since the last president, George Shea and secretary, Alvin Rode, are no longer residents here, nomination of officers for the executive was called.

Officers elected: president, Bill Lewis; secretary, Annie Shaw; directors, Emil Sather, Lawrence Laughy, Ed. Harrington and Octave Prevost.

It was disclosed that as of October, 1968, the Wanham Board of Trade had a bank balance of \$144.91. Moved by Lawrence Laughy, seconded by Octave Prevost that the Board of Trade bank balance be turned over to COCO. Carried.

Moved by Jim Rutherford, seconded by Octave Prevost that the Board of Trade be closed out June 1, 1972. Carried.

Jim Rutherford moved adjournment.



The Friendship Train leaving Wanham.

TO THE EDMONTON JOURNAL FROM CENTRAL PEACE RIVER ASSOCIATED BOARDS OF TRADE

Dear Sirs; I notice a press report in your issue of October 28 Section Two, in which Mr. Laughlin, M.L.A. for Grande Prairie states as follows. Quote: "The

member said there is strong support in the north country for the new road, also the opposition to this road is not as serious as it might appear."

I wish to draw to Mr. McLaughlin's attention that he represents, according to the voters list for the last provincial election, about 23% of the voters of the Peace River country and I think Mr. McLaughlin should cover the other three constituencies and he will find out that there is considerable opposition and when he considers that these constituencies contain about 77% of the voters, I don't think he should be so optimistic.

He will find that there is opposition not to the cutoff if it was carried out as per the resolution passed, with the approval of the Grande Prairie constituency delegates at the 1948 road conference when it was passed by a unanimous vote that this cutoff should be from Whitecourt to Snipe Lake so that it would be of benefit to the whole Peace River country and not a small south portion.

At this conference it was agreed that the Central Peace River Highway should be completed from Donnelly to Baytree and a bridge at the Smoky River before any new construction was started through unsettled areas.

Trusting you will give this equal publicity to that given Mr. McLaughlin's statement. Yours truly.

PLAN EARLY START ON NORTHERN ROAD

Working from both ends of the project, crews are to commence immediately on clearing and brushing the Whitecourt cutoff road, according to Ira McLaughlin, M.L.A. for Grande Prairie.

The member said Saturday that he has been told by the provincial public works department that brushing operations are to start without any delay.

The road, running through unsurveyed territory from Whitecourt north to Valleyview, east of Grande Prairie, would be 72 miles shorter than the present route, according to Mr. McLaughlin.

Speaking to the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce Thursday night, Mr. McLaughlin disclosed the information he had received concerning the Whitecourt road. One reason for his statement was a northern press report which claimed that in view of objections, the department had decided not to proceed with work on the Whitecourt route, he explained Saturday.

Mr. McLaughlin told The Journal that in view of brushing of the right-of-way being projected, it was to be expected that this would be followed by actual construction.

The member said there is strong support in the north country for the new road.

"The opposition to this road is not as serious as might appear," he commented.

Some weeks ago, it was reported in Edmonton that the Provincial Department of Public Works was making plans to carry on road brushing during the winter.

While this work is to be undertaken, the department also plans to continue improvements to the present Peace River Highway.

CABINET TO ANNOUNCE DECISION

Just before press time last night, Hon. David Ure, acting minister of Public Works for Alberta, announced that the Government had decided to go ahead on the Whitecourt-Valleyview cutoff route. No date for completion of the work was announced. In his announcement, the minister said the Government had decided to go ahead with the Whitecourt-Valleyview project "After an exhaustive review."

The Alberta Government will decide - perhaps this week - whether work will be resumed immediately on the Whitecourt-Valleyview cutoff route.

Government leaders, meeting with representatives of all sections of the Peace country and the four M.L.A.'s from the northern constituencies, last Thursday said the whole question of the cutoff would be put before the Cabinet within "A few days."

Meanwhile, there was every indication the "stop" order slapped on brushing work along the proposed route before the meeting last week would remain in effect until the Government had come to a decision.

The "stop" order and the subsequent meeting in Edmonton with the Government came on the heels of protests from a meeting at High Prairie that existing roads in the Peace should be improved before the cutoff project was undertaken.

The meeting in Edmonton with Government leaders last Thursday was preceded on Wednesday by a session of the Continuing Road Committee of the Peace River Highway Conference of 1948 when views of representatives of all sections of the Peace were heard.

At the conference with the Government representatives, J.O. Patterson, president of the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce, in speaking for an immediate resumption of work on the Valleyview-Whitecourt road, pointed out the route had been selected by the engineers after a survey of all sections of the Peace had been made.

Representatives of central and northern Boards of Trade repeated their claim that existing roads in the Peace and present needs to the Peace should be improved before the cutoff was started. They also pressed for an exhaustive survey of the Snipe Lake area as a possible terminus of the cutoff, instead of Valleyview.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE WATINO BRIDGE OPENING JUNE 15, 1955

Receipts

Proceeds from Stickers	\$145.47
Proceeds from Watino Wrestling	60.00
Stickers sold (private)	.60
Sale of stickers at Wanham	11.70
Total received	\$217.77

Expenditures

C.J. Lampert, Phones, Stamp Books, Envelopes	14.37
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Opening of the Watino Bridge - 1955.

William Didow (Stickers, Express, Telegrams)	253.54
Lionel Roy (Public Address System and Bridge)	20.00
W.S.U. Mimeographing	1.00
Band, Beaverlodge and Bridge	50.00
Herald Tribune on Account	60.00
The Signal (Printing)	40.00
E.J. Harrington, Phoning	6.35
The Signal (Balance of Account)	23.01
Herald Tribune (Printing)	45.05
E.J. Harrington (Stamps)	1.00
C.J. Lampert (Stamps)	.70

Total Expenses	\$515.02
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Amount \$515.02 paid out came to be \$297.25 in excess of what was taken in. Therefore, six Boards of Trades in the Association contributed cash \$54.00 towards the deficit, leaving \$243.25 to be paid out of the reserve fund along with 60¢ exchange on cheques leaving the Association with only 75¢ in the bank.

NEW ALBERTA HIGHWAY ROUTE IS ANNOUNCED Calgary Herald December 14, 1950

Edmonton (CP) - Alberta's new road link between Edmonton and the Peace River District will be routed through Whitecourt and Valleyview, Hon. David A. Ure, acting minister of public works, announced.

FRUITS OF THE 'FRIENDSHIP TRAIN'

Many benefits will follow last week's trip by Edmonton businessmen through the Peace River country. The "Friendship Train" was happily named, for already it is evident that visitors and hosts laid the foundations for what should be enduring friendships between individuals and communities.

One of the first fruits of the interchange of ideas is a conference to be held in Edmonton in the near future on

the best course a good all-weather highway should take through the country lying between this city and the southern terminus of the Alaska Highway. As President Winspear of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce has said, "there is a route for this highway, but it must be the best one, and all chambers and boards must be prepared to give their wholehearted support to the most logical route."

If all the communities between Edmonton and Dawson Creek can achieve that degree of co-operation and community interest, on this one matter alone, as against local interest, all the energy, time and expense put into the friendship tour will have been repaid many times over.

To many, of course, the often-proposed Whitecourt cutoff offers advantages over any other route, especially as a tourist feeder for the Alaska Highway. On the other hand, some communities fear that siting the southern end of the main Peace River highway on a direct line between Grande Prairie and Edmonton would be short-sighted, for it would of necessity bypass several thriving centres.

Almost any route suggested will run into similar conflicts of interest and opinion. That is why we say that if the matter of the route to be taken by the all-weather highway, a vital necessity, can be settled by agreement between all the northern communities, nothing in the future should be beyond their collective capacity.

A heartfelt vote of thanks is due President Winspear of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, who not only had a great deal to do with initiating and making a success of the "Friendship Train" itself, but who is continuing the good work of cementing the interests and the efforts of Edmonton and the great land to the northwest.



Cutting the Ribbon at Opening of Watino Bridge.

WATINO BRIDGE

Herald-Tribune, 1955

"In about seven weeks the final pier of the Watino Smoky River bridge and steel work and decking on the newest link in Peace River travel will swing into action" noted the Herald-Tribune, February 10, 1955. "Construction foreman on the concrete work says he couldn't give definite estimate but that he feels his end of the work

will be wound up in less than two months.

"With two shifts working 18 hours a day, workmen were plunging deeper into the water surface in a frantic effort to get excavation work for piers completed before the weather broke - either one way or the other."

Heading a full page of bridge construction photos "Work Forges Ahead on Watino Span" the press explained "There was enough frost to keep holes in cribbing frozen shut and not enough to cause dangerous shifting of ice. Slowed earlier because of high waves and a consequent collapse of cribbing which in a few brief moments undid many hours of labor, the project is back on an even keel and moving at top speed. Decking has already been completed on more than half of the bridge and base work on all but the last remaining pier is completed."

"Watino hums with activity throughout the winter months under the impetus of the big Park Brothers Mill and the crews working 18 hours a day push the new Smoky River bridge to completion. With completion of the bridge Watino is most likely to realize a brisk upswing in tourist trade, becoming the focal point between the north and south peace."

THE WANHAM PROGRESSIVE CLUB

*submitted by Mrs. Art Ramsfield (nee Cameron),
a one time Secretary-Treasurer
of The Wanham Progressive Club*

The Wanham Progressive Club had its beginning in the late summer of 1930. Mr. Irwin Hilliard, the United Church student minister at that time in Wanham, was interested in starting a women's church group. He discussed the idea with the ladies who attended his services, and as a result, a meeting was held at the home of Mrs. George Munro. Among the five or six ladies present at that first meeting were Mrs. Roy Cameron, Mrs. George MacDonald, Mrs. Pete Tansem, and possibly Mrs. Duncan Cameron and Mrs. Pickard Sr. (Ralph Pickard's mother). It was recognized that there was a real



Wanham Ladies Progressive Club at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Francis. Back Row, Left to Right: Mrs. Trumpower, Mrs. G. MacDonald, Mrs. Blonski, Mrs. Sawers, Mrs. Bush, unknown, Mary Sather, Mrs. Wiegel. Centre Row: Dora Quamme, Mrs. Francis. Front Row: Maxine Quamme, Sharon Quamme, Mrs. Hauser, Sheena Sawers, unknown.

need for an organization which could serve the community in a personal way, but they felt it should include any and all women who wished to join. Since Wanham was a community of mixed religions, it was decided to form a club apart from any church affiliation.

So with Mr. Hilliard in charge, officers were chosen from those ladies present and the club was formed. Mr. George Munro suggested the name for the newly formed club be "The Wanham Progressive Club" and the name was unanimously accepted. Among the early known members up to 1940 besides the above mentioned were -- Mrs. Joe Hauser, Mrs. Trumpower, Mrs. Weigel, Mrs. B. Burchell, Mrs. Ed Fortier, Mrs. J.J. Harrington, Mrs. R. Sawers, Dr. E.M. Johnson, Mrs. Jack Lampert, Mrs. Art Ramsfield, Mrs. Blonski, Mrs. Cliff Tansem and Mrs. Hjalmer Tansem.

One of the first tasks the members set themselves was sewing layettes for new mothers. Times were very hard and there was little money. Though it may seem hard to believe, in some cases the new mother had not so much as a diaper nor a blanket for her baby. Word of these needs were passed on by the doctors and nurses who worked in Wanham. One of these, Dr. Margaret Owen, encouraged the club's efforts.

The members of The Wanham Progressive Club sewed articles for sales and held teas to raise funds. Their fall whist drive and auction sale became an annual event. Mr. George MacDonald proved an able auctioneer and his ready wit created lots of fun. His standard remark as he held up an article and called for bids was "it's all wool and a yard wide". The ladies took turns in holding the meetings at their homes and these were often quilting bees, and were always a pleasant social outing. If the roads were bad, and they often were, the men would gather up the members and drive them by team to the meetings which might be several miles from town.

It is worthwhile to note that all funds raised by these hard working members of The Wanham Progressive Club were used entirely to help the community as a whole, wherever the need arose. In one specific instance, they learned that Mrs. H. Rogers was gravely ill. They arranged for Mrs. Jack Murphy, a trained nurse living west of Wanham, to accompany Mrs. Rogers to the Calgary sanitarium. Club funds paid for the nurse's fare and she gladly donated her services.

Wanham can be justly proud of the The Wanham Progressive Club and its close to 50 years of service in the community.

WANHAM'S LADIES PROGRESSIVE CLUB

by Ann Shaw

The Club came into being early in the Depression years. Its objective was and still is, to help those in need regardless of race, color or creed. Then, the members supplied home-made baby layettes, bedding, clothing, etc.; but now, help is usually in the form of a money donation.

None of the original members live here now but two early members who do are Mollie Tansem and Aureore Prevost.

Our regular fund raising events are: a Mother's Day Strawberry Tea held in May, and a Whist Drive, Bazaar and Quilt Raffle held in November. We sponsor the Auctioneer's Charity Auction, the entire proceeds of which are sent to the Fund for Mentally Retarded. Also we work with the Wanham Council to keep the playground operational.

The club is affiliated with C.O.C.O. Monthly meetings are held in the homes of the members. Presently our President is Solveig Hansen and the Secretary is Dorothea Fowler.

Any lady is extended a cordial invitation to join our club. We welcome you to this area and trust your life here will be a happy one.

DECEMBER 5, 1935

The Ladies Aid of Wanham held their annual whist drive and sale in the Community Hall on Thursday, Nov. 28, with a very good turnout. Mrs. D. Wells was one of the lucky ticket holders on one of the club's quilts and Mr. O. Ferguson of Belloy was the other. This was Mr. Ferguson's second year to win one of the club's quilts.

The monthly meeting of the Tobagem Club was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Tansem with the honors going to Mrs. Art Tansem, Mr. Albert Leriger winning first in Bunko.

HALL ASSOCIATION

by Adelaide Zmean

Written records outlining the beginning of the hall association either did not exist or have been lost. Therefore, what follows is a consensus of views expressed by such-old timers as Art and Mollie Tansem and Octave Prevost.

The Birchview U.F.A. had a motion on their books in June of 1920 requesting that all donated lumber for the hall be on site by June 26, 1920. However, nothing further was mentioned so we must assume that nothing was done at this time.

A group of citizens started selling shares in 1925 at \$10.00 each but didn't start building the hall until 1927. Donations of lumber and labor were also requested. There were 54 shareholders. George MacDonald was mentioned as the person in charge of construction. The hall was built on the site where the U.F.A. now stands. It was later moved to its present site - probably in 1937.

The sports association didn't acquire land until 1933 or 1934. Until that date they used various sites. There was a baseball diamond near the hall on Pete Tansem's farm. Before the hall was built an open-air platform was built for dancing at the picnic site.

The hall was moved from its original site where the U.F.A. now stands to its present site by use of a stump puller. Bill Davis had a stump puller and one large horse. The procedure was slow but effective. A hole was dug in the road, a hook on the chain was fastened in the hole and the horse was used to wind the chain around a drum. The procedure was repeated over and over until the hall reached its present site. Exactly how long it took was not recorded but two days has been mentioned.

HALL ASSOCIATION (Wanhamite)

On December 3, 1929, only chairman Bode, A.D. St. Pierre and Hans Mortenson came to the hall for the meeting of the hall association. The meeting was called for the purpose of electing officers for the coming year. It was thought best to notify all shareholders by cards calling for a meeting December 14 at 8 p.m. Notices were sent on December 6. There follows a list of shareholders at this time. Shares had been purchased at \$10.00 each.

A. McLean, L.C. Tansem, P. Tansem, Joe Mayer 2 shares, Gust Thorin, Ed. Harrington, A.D. St. Pierre, R. Johnson, E.H. Prevost, H. Sheedy, H. Girard, Chas. Wing, H.F. Johnson, Art Johnson, Lawrence Toftner, Charles Geller 2 shares, H. Mortenson, O.B. Reid, Robert Webster, Mike Shannon, P. Ericson, Ed Fortier, Eric Pearson, Pete Anderson, Zack Lemoine, G.H. MacDonald, O. Tansem, C. Olsen, Art Tansem, Cliff Tansem, C. Erstad, L.W. Hoeght, N. Jacobsen, R. Pickard, R.C. Fitton, Dodge Hardware, Peter McDonald, Martin Bode 2 1/2 shares, Tom Mohair 2 1/2 shares, Bert McKenzie, H. Thorin, Donald Munroe, F.M. Murphy, Geo. Saunders, D. Cameron, Ray Tansem, G.D. Munroe, B. Burchel and Miss Smith, O. Oakleaf, William Trumpower, Lundy and Rogers, V.O. Olson, Art Ramsfield, A. Sandercock.

Cards were sent to 54 members. Seven original members reported as dead leaving 47 shareholders.



"The Musicians". Left to Right: Sam Ramsfield, Emil Bolduc and Art Tansem.

WANHAM HALL AND SPORTS ASSOCIATION

by Adelaide Zmean

The two organizations, the Wanham Hall Association and the Wanham Sports Association, were amalgamated in April of 1939 under the name the Wanham Hall and Sports Association. The first executive of the new organization consisted of: President, B. Grant; Vice President, H. Gerard; Sec. Treasurer, E.H. Prevost; Executive Committee, E.J. Harrington, E. Hill, P.



"The Three Aces Orchestra". Left to Right: Ed Prevost, Joe Jasbec and Louis Hoeght.

Tansem, N. Jacobsen.

In June, 1939, there is the first mention of the badminton club. Their fee being set at \$10.00 yearly but they would be required to supply their own wood and lights.

On July 28, 1939, there was an old-time fiddler's contest held in the hall and broadcast over the radio. There were 16 contestants. The winners were: first, Alex Waroniuk; second, Pete Tansem; third, L.C. Tansem. The power for the broadcast was provided by Ralph Pichard's generator.

December 8 and 9, 1939, the first Yukon Nites were held.

Through the years the members of the Hall and Sports Association were concerned with many things such as: sports days, shows, dances, piano, gymnasium club, victory day dance, new hall, better show equipment and turkey shoots. The minutes reflect the concern of the members to provide entertainment for the general public at a reasonable charge.

In July of 1946 an overhead projection area was built on the east end of the hall with N. Jacobsen as the carpenter.

In July of 1947 the hall was extended 10 feet to accommodate a projection room, cloak room and ticket office. The first projectionist after the renovations was John Hall.

In March of 1948 the wives of members were allowed to vote.

In April, 1948, the Yukon Nites sponsored a queen contest. The Wanham queen candidate, Clara Hauser, was crowned queen. Yukon Nite included: a bank which sold patrons Yukon money, a sheriff who jailed various citizens and set bail, games of chance such as crown and anchor, seven up and under, darts and jitney dance.

It was also in April, 1948, that a savings account was set up for a new hall.

In March, 1949, money was borrowed from the building fund for a new projector.

In May of 1951 it was decided to use the money in the building fund and repair the old hall.

In April of 1952 the Central Hall committee was asked to consider moving their hall into Wanham.

The Board of Trade borrowed \$1,500.00 from the Hall and Sport Association to build a reservoir, terms 2% for two years.

Wanham

Theatre

Show Time: Monday and Tuesday, 8 p.m. only

Friday and Saturday, 7 and 9 p.m.

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ONLY TWO CAN PLAY
(Adult)
Peter Sellers, Mai Zetterling

Mon. and Tues. December 10 and 11
BOB AND SALLY
(Adult)
Sex Hygiene Picture

Mon. and Tues. December 17 and 18
MURDER SHE SAID
(Family)
Margaret Rutherford, Arthur Kennedy

Mon. and Tues. December 24 and 25
FOLLOW THAT DREAM
(Tech. - Cinemascope - Family)
Elvis Presley, Ann Helm

Mon. and Tues. December 31 and January 1
RING A DING RHYTHM
(Family)
Chubby Checkers, Dukes of Dixieland

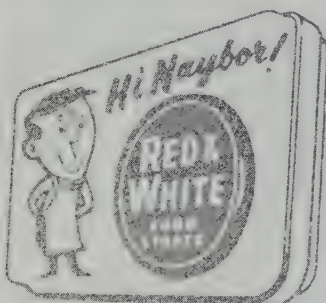
Fri. and Sat. December 7 and 8
PARENT TRAP
(Tech. - Family)
Hayley Mills, Brian Keith

Fri. and Sat. December 14 and 15
LONELY ARE THE BRAVE
(Adult - Cinemascope)
Kirk Douglas, Gena Rowlands

Fri. and Sat. December 21 and 22
THE OUTSIDER
starring
Tony Curtis, Bruce Bennett

Fri. and Sat. December 28 and 29
BEST OF ENEMIES
(Tech. - Family)

Show Times: Mon. and Tues. at 8 p.m. - Fri. and Sat. 7 and 9 p.m.



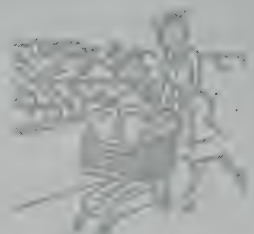
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On May 7, 1953 coronation day festivities were planned.

In November, 1953, a loan was taken to repair the hall and in 1954 another loan to procure an addition to the sports ground.

In March, 1955, the association was forced to go on a volunteer basis in order to improve the financial situation. All personnel required to operate the shows were drawn from a list of volunteers. This volunteer service lasted until all the debts were paid and a bank account had been built up again.

In April, 1958, the hall was rented to Mr. Ziniuk from Spirit River to operate a 35 mm projector and a sloping floor was installed in 1960.

In 1962 the Hall and Sports Association bought the 35 mm equipment from Mr. Ziniuk and George Moojelsky was the first projectionist.

In November, 1963, shows were cancelled because of financial problems. The advent of television had a depressing effect on revenue from shows.



Left to Right: Paul Leriger, Maggie Ungstad and Cliff Tansem with his button accordion.



Wanham Hall Gets Floor Tile - 1967.

In November, 1964, the sloping floor was removed.

In March, 1970, a motion to amalgamate in one organization was passed.

In April, 1970, all loans contracted in 1963 were repaid and the Wanham Hall and Sports Association became one of the organizations forming C.O.C.O.

MAY 5, 1938

WANHAM PEOPLE PUT ON FINE PROGRAM OVER CFGP

Presenting a program of vocal and instrumental solos, duets, quartets and choral numbers that ranked with the best were put on over the Parade of Talent hour, a group of artists from the village of Wanham gave the concluding program Sunday afternoon to that popular series of broadcasts conducted by A.E. Galway over CFGP. The choral work was well balanced and showed careful training. Two of the soloists will be remembered here - Mrs. Hoeght (Onagh Harrington) and her brother, Ed Harrington, the former winning high praise for her singing at Musical Festivals and in concerts. She has also sung over Edmonton radio stations.

A delightfully original number was travelogue with banjo and guitar accompaniment, representing a trip around the world with a bit of the language and music of each "port of call." Altogether the program was much enjoyed and showed real talent. The first half consisted of sacred numbers, the second was secular.

Following is the program: Choral group: "Master, the Tempest is Raging", Solo: "Open The Gates Of The Temple" by E.J. Harrington, Duet: "In The Garden" by Mrs. A. Sandercock (Vera Tansem) and Mrs. R. Tansem (Ida Sather), Male Quartet: "Were You There" (spiritual) by Messrs. Harrington, Hoeght, Hill and Tansem, Solo: "Jesus, Lover Of My Soul" by Mrs. E.W. Trump (Hazel), Mixed Quartet: "Beauty For Ashes" by Mr. and Mrs. Hoeght, Mrs. Tansem and E. Harrington, Choral group: "I Will Sing The Wondrous Story", Violin solo: "Adoration" by W.M. Hill, Solos, French numbers with guitar accompaniment: "J'amie la Chant des Oineaux" and "Le Chanson de Cr Peau" by E.H. Prevost, Solo: "The Sleepy Hollow Tune" by Mrs. Hoeght, Banjo Solo: "Tiger Rag" by E.L. Hoeght, Travelogue: L. Hoeght on the banjo, E.H. Prevost on the guitar and Mrs. J.M. Smart on the piano.

WANHAM SOCIAL AND DRAMATIC CLUB

by Lawrence J. Laughy

It really is a thrill just to recall this organization because of the success it had in putting on so many fine "Plays".

This Club was organized about 1930 or '31. The aim and object was, or course, to raise a bit of money to keep current community projects active.

Some of the plays that were put on were, The Sap; Hurry, Hurry and The Heart of a Shamrock, to mention a few. They were fine plays. The one I will always remember as a favourite had to be The Heart of a Shamrock.

In this play there were three brothers who were Catholic. The elder brother was cast as a Priest, (Robert (Bob) Sawers) who was also the director. The younger brother was cast as an Outlaw, (Adolph Fortier). The third brother was Lawrence Laughy, the Sheriff.

After a smooth first act, the second curtain had been

raised, two shots rang out. The Priest gave no sign that he had heard. Sitting in an easy chair he read. In a short while the door flew open and Laddie, the outlaw brother, burst into the room. The Priest, now on his feet, ran to the boy. After a flurry of words, the Priest took the boy through a door into another part of the house. For a few minutes there was great activity outside. The Priest returned greatly agitated, quickly moved over to the window and looked out. Hardly stopping, he whirled around, grabbed a book, sat down and calmly resumed a reading posture. There were three loud knocks on the door. His stomach was churning but the Priest looked up and said, "It's open." In one long step the Sheriff was in the room. The eyes of the Priest and the Sheriff clashed for a moment then the Sheriff asked, "Where is he, Jim?" Like a true Irishman, the Priest asked, "And why should I know of his whereabouts?" That was enough for "The Shamrock". He knew that Jim, being a Priest, would not lie to him and since he had not answered him, Laddie had to be in the other room. Quickly crossing the room and drawing a vicious looking 45 Colt as he moved, he reached the door. Hitting the door with the butt of the revolver, he commanded Laddie to come out. Slowly the door opened. Laddie came out, hurt and bleeding, with his eyes cast toward the floor. The Sheriff glanced quickly at the Priest made up to look older. The Priest's features were twisted in agony. From the chest of the Sheriff came an uncontrollable sob; while Laddie, unashamed, let his tears drop on the stage.

The curtain came down with a crash! Everyone on the stage, behind the stage and those who were in the hall knew that what they had just seen was not written into the script, but was the end result of a master director who at one time directed in Glasgow, Scotland. A man who had the Genius to get the best out of the entire cast. I will never forget the play nor the director. To me he was always, "Mr. Sawers."



The Cast of "The Heart of a Shamrock". Left to Right: Elaine Johnston, Adolph Fortier, Barbara Johnston, Lawrence Laughy and Mrs. Martin Bode.

The Wanham Social and Dramatic Club had 50 members, give or take a few. Otherwise, the membership was steady in its strength. This permitted a lot of good things to happen.

There were always plenty of willing hands to help with any project the Club might wish to become interested in. The three and four act plays which the Club produced were for public entertainment as well as a means to gather money. The plays were presented in various halls; the farthest being in town of Peace River. The nearest would probably have been the Central Hall in the Peoria District. I also remember we presented a play in the new home of Mr. and Mrs. William Rottacker in the same area.

Travelling was a problem those days. The condition of the so called roads contributed greatly to the uncertainty of any journey. It took much time and patience to go anywhere.



Left to Right: Lawrence Laughy, Mrs. Martin Bode, Ed Prevost and Daphne Fortier.

The stage scenery was built by the members right in the hall. Doors, windows, and solid walls were interchangeable and could be moved quickly.

The stage ceiling was really neat. It was made up of four lengths of cotton (36 inches wide) the full width of the hall. The material was stretched tight from wall to wall, then made secure both top and bottom allowing the 36 inch width of the material to hang down. One strip was stretched along the back wall; one strip up front directly behind the curtain. The remaining two strips were stretched at equal distances between the front one and the back one.

From the hall floor they gave the illusion of plaster or gyproc and could also be changed quickly if the need should arise.

The monthly meetings were always well attended. The business part of the meeting was generally wound up with dispatch. Before the entertainment began, there would be a break. During this time, everyone would circulate talking with old and new friends. Just having fun. Next you would be brought to order and asked to be seated.

Now the curtain was being drawn and for the next thirty minutes to one full hour you would be well en-



Lawrence and Elvira Laughy.



Wanham C.G.I.T. Group in Play Costumes. Leader - Grace Wishart.

The lunch committee was always there with the goodies to wind up the evening.

tertained. The entertainment soon came to an end. The members of the group would now go to the floor where they would mingle with the others to make sure that everyone was mixing so that there would be no wall flowers. For the rest of the evening each one was on their own.

In no time a person may be up dancing or just talking to someone. Inevitably, you became a person who was

JUNE 1, 1938

CGIT PUTS ON FIRST MOTHER AND DAUGHTER BANQUET

The first CGIT Mother and Daughter Banquet to be held in Wanham was a success. The theme was "Patriotism" in honor of the visit of the King and Queen



Wanham C.G.I.T. Group. Back Row, Left to Right: Darlene Urness, Penny Fimrite, Esther Bohnke, Gloria Morrell, Carolyn Urness, Janice Bennett, Wenche Ranestad. Front Row: Karen Wilford, Ruth Kaspro, Wendy Connell, Carol Tansem, Karen Sather, Peggy Connell, Brenda Tansem.

never bothered when you had to walk into a room or hall filled with people. You could act on stage or speak to a gathering and actually enjoy it. It was a great help to me.

Before the evening ended, volunteers were called for the various groups that would be needed to take charge of the next monthly meeting.

to Canada. Tables were beautifully decorated in red, white and blue. The place cards and serviettes bore flags and each guest was presented with a tiny silk flag. Plants and tall red and blue candles graced each of the three tables placed in a U-shape.

The banquet over, a short program took place, with

Vera Laughy presiding in the chair. "O Canada!" was sung to open the program. An address of welcome and an outline of the GCIT program was given by Vera Laughy. The girls then rose and sang the CGIT hymn and repeated the purpose. Kathelene Cameron and Ethel Metz gave toasts to the King and Queen. Clara Hauser gave a toast to the mothers and Mrs. Trump replied with a toast to the daughters. Several numbers were presented by the girls and a sing-song was enjoyed by all.

The evening concluded by singing "God Save The King" and "Taps".

Those present were: Betty Trump, Mrs. Trump, Jean Harrington, Mrs. E.J. Harrington, Doris Blonski, Mrs. Blonski, Ethel Metz, Mrs. Metz, Kazmira Jacobowski, Mrs. Jacobowski, Mrs. L. Fowler, Norma MacDonald, Mary Bryndzac, Mrs. Bryndzac, Leola Fowler, Mrs. F. Fowler, Esther Kandt, Miss N. Horne, Kathelene Cameron, Mrs. Cameron, Leader Mentelene Cameron, Mrs. Ramsfield, Margaret MacDonald, Mrs. Pickard, Ethel MacDonald, Mrs. Sandercock, Clara Hauser, Mrs. Hauser, Vera Laughy, Mrs. O. Prevost, Frieda Kandt, Mrs. J. Kandt, Rosella Wiegel, Mrs. Wiegel, Staffy Chernawski, Mrs. Hill, Leader Muriel Grant, and Mrs. Jacobsen.

GIRL GUIDES

by Ozan McSweeney

As far as Girl Guides are concerned I'll try to remember as much as I can.

I actually went to teach in High Prairie in 1944 to learn about Guiding. Mrs. Trump was quite involved and I did get a lot of pointers. Then I came back and taught in Wanham, 1945-1946-1947 and that's when I started Guides there. I believe it was about 1946.



Wanham Girl Guides. Left to Right: Betty Rae, Clare Lampert, Elaine Harrington, Dolores Chilton, Ramona Russell, Florence Ayling, Gloria Johnson, Kay Bice, Dolly Bozarth, Doris Ayling, Joyce Lee, Ozan McSweeney.

We held our meetings in the Presbyterian Church. I think I had about 19 girls (quite a large group). Maggie Ungstad was also teaching so I made her my assistant (she had a title but I sure can't remember what it was). She was in charge of games and if you remember Maggie, she had some pretty rough ones.

The girls had the uniforms with hat and long black

stockings. We had several hikes in the fall, I remember, to the Burnt, etc. and in March we had a minstrel show. Remember? Other than that I really haven't much more information.



St. Patrick's Ladies of the Altar. Left to Right: Mrs. Sandercock, Mrs. L. Leriger, Mrs. Gerard, Grandma Leriger, Mrs. Laughy, Memere Prevost, Frances Metz.

JUNE 24, 1937

At last Wanham is to have a permanent sportsground and volunteers have been out clearing up the land which was purchased from L.A. Leriger.

FEBRUARY 24, 1938

AN AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY FORMED IN WANHAM

An organization of farmers from the Wanham, Belloy, West Vale and Heart Valley Districts was held in Wanham on Wednesday, Feb. 16. An Agricultural Improvement Society was formed with the object of furthering all phases of agriculture in this area. Steps were taken to have a junior grain club formed.

The following officers were elected: President - W.K. Ziprick, Vice-president - H. Meadus, Secretary - H. Cameron.



Ball Game at Wanham in the Early Days.



Ladies' Softball Team - mid '30s. Left to Right: Rose Tansem, Yvonne Prevost, Barbara Johnstone, Gladys Tansem, Hazel Trump, Ida Tansem, Vera Sandercock and Lorraine Johnstone.



Ladies' Softball Team.

JULY 6, 1939

WANHAM SPORTS "HIT THE BALL" IN A BIG WAY

There was a good line of races for the kiddies, boys, girls, ladies and men at the First of July sports here last Saturday, also broad jumping, horseshoe tournament and novelty events for all classes, but it seemed hard to drag people away from the ball games. A good suggestion would be to have more time in the afternoon between the semi-final and final ball games to run off these other events.

The horseshoe tournament ran from early morning until late at night and was enjoyed by both young and old.

The dance got underway about 8 p.m. with one of the largest crowds at the dance held in Wanham for several years. The orchestra never let up and the crowd stayed with them. All reported a real sports day and dance and we hope they will be back again.

BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Wanham vs. Belloy

The first game between Wanham and Belloy got away at 11:45 a.m. First innings ended in a blank score, but Wanham scored four runs in the second and three more

in the fourth, mostly due to errors on the part of the Belloy squad. Wanham reciprocated with the odd error in the last half of the fourth and Belloy pushed four men across the plate. Belloy scored one run in the fifth, seventh and ninth, Wanham two in the ninth to win the game nine to seven.

Batteries: For Belloy, Urness, Slettedahl and Culshaw. For Wanham, Laughy and Bozy.

Rycroft vs. Central Teams

The second game between Rycroft and Central Teams started immediately after the first game and turned out to be a real game to watch. While Rycroft held Centrals scoreless and scored seven runs themselves, this was no indication of the play, and no doubt if Centrals had had their full regular team they would have made it more interesting for the Rycroft players, but they had to pick up three players to make up the team, and this would make it hard on any team. Rycroft scored one run in each of the second, sixth and ninth and two in each of the fifth and eighth innings. We would like to see these two teams meet at the Centrals sports on July 12 when Centrals will be able to field their regular team and we venture to say it would be the best game of the day.

Batteries: For Rycroft, Lazoruk and Lazoruk. For Centrals, Tracy, McLean, Nagel and Sather.

Final Game - Rycroft vs. Wanham

The final game between Rycroft and Wanham started on schedule at 6 p.m. with both teams on their toes. Rycroft opened the scoring with two in the first, but Wanham came back with two in the second to tie it up. Rycroft, however, could not be held and pushed three across the plate in the third and one each in the fourth and sixth to make the score, 7 - 2, at the start of the seventh. Then things started to happen. Rycroft did not score in their half but Wanham went on the rampage, when Hannas walked a couple of men and Wanham started to connect in their half of the innings. Rycroft replaced Hannas with Lazoruk on the mound but Wanham were on and connected with everything the pitcher had to offer, and when the third man was tagged and the dust settled, they had seven more runs to add to their score. Neither team scored in the last two innings, the score ending 9 - 7 for Wanham.

This game proved to be a real game to climax the tournament and did the fans support their respective teams? Well, the umpire needed a loudspeaker in order that the batter could hear what was called on him.

Batteries: For Rycroft, Hannas, Lazoruk and Lazoruk. For Wanham, Laughy, Jones and Bozy.

Wanham will be on hand at Rycroft Sports and will give Rycroft a chance on their own grounds if they are unable to meet before that date, and I wouldn't bet a plugged nickel on either team, as it will be a tough game.

Thanks again, Belloy, Central and Rycroft, for your attendance.

SOFTBALL

Belloy vs. Wanham

The Softball Cup, which was donated by the Wanham sport fans, produced another first-class softball game when the Belloy school team attended Wanham sports to play the Wanham team, which had taken the cup from them several weeks ago and had defended it successfully



Wanham Baseball Team - 1948. Back Row, Left to Right: Wally Tansem, Vic Lakusta, Ernie Gouchee, Stewart Bennett, Manager; Clarence Tansem, Elmer Sather, Edwin Sather. Front Row: Allan Sather, Gordon MacDonald, Lyall Tansem, Bat Boy; Albert Leriger, Coach; Dave Tansem.



Wanham Baseball Club. Left to Right: Ray Tansem, Sam Ramsfield, Albert Suik, Octave Prevost, W. Ripley, Art Pickard and Olly Pickard.

several times since. But in every case the score was close and were hard games for the Belloy team to lose.

However, they came to Wanham with blood in their eyes, and they certainly went to work. Both teams played a brand of softball which would be a credit to any adult team and when the smoke had cleared away Belloy school were the proud possessors of the cup, and even the loser, I think, were glad to see Belloy get the cup after the tough games they had lost during the past few weeks in trying to win it.

The score will indicate what kind of game it was, without anything else: Belloy, 5, Wanham, 4.

Ladies' Softball Game

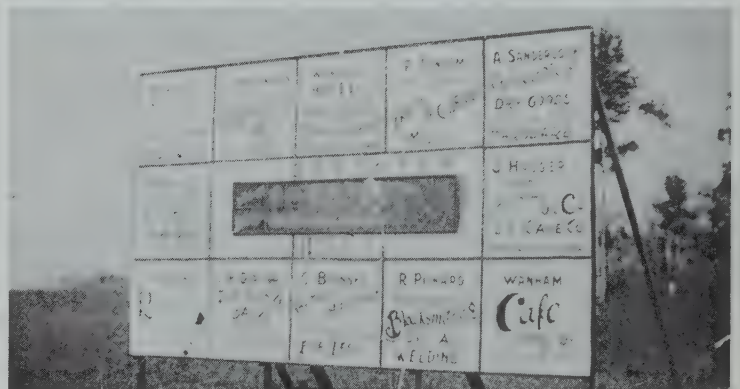
The Belloy Ladies' Softball team also attended the Wanham sports to return the game which the Wanham ladies played at Belloy sports, when they took the Wanham ladies into camp, and even though the Wanham ladies had been practicing hard since their loss to Belloy, they were still unable to hold the Belloy ladies and lost one of the best games of the sports day by a score of Belloy - 17, Wanham - 15.

Keep it up ladies, appoint a good coach and listen to what he has to say and get out to practice, and you can take any team to camp that you play with.

To these teams we also say thanks and come again.

Thanks

The Wanham Sports Committee wish to take this



Score Board - Wanham Sports Ground - 1937.

opportunity of thanking everyone who attended for their most hearty support, and especially the visiting ball teams, not only for their attendance but for being on time. It certainly helped the committee to get the program off on time and the only team the committee had to wait for was our own team. We trust that this will not become a habit with them.



Wanham Baseball Team. Back Row, Left to Right: Paul Leriger, Albert Leriger, Lorne Haralson, Gordon MacDonald, Victor Wiegel. Front Row: Clarence Tansem, Elmer Sather, Noel Boisvert, Wally Tansem, Edwin Sather.



Wanham Boys' Baseball Team. Back Row, Left to Right: Billy Waters, Maurice Bolduc, Harvey Prevost, Harvey Laughy, Denny Sather, Buddy Sather, Harold Wiegel. Front Row: Spike Leriger, David Wiegel, Paul Leriger, Ray Waters, Neil Fowler, Jim Sather, Raymond Bolduc.



Wanham Wildcats Baseball Team - 1970s.

TO BUILD ONE-SHEET CURLING RINK AT WANHAM THIS YEAR

For the first time in the history of Wanham, a curling rink from there has participated in a bonspiel.

In conversation with The Tribune reporter, the boys from Wanham stated that plans were laid for the building of a one-sheet curling rink this coming summer. They explained that provision could be made for an additional sheet, if required.

"You can quite understand," observed Alex Laughland. "That without a rink we are greatly handicapped at the Grande Prairie Bonspiel because of lack of practice."

MARCH 4, 1934

Wanham Keenly Interested In Sports

Wanham is an enthusiastic sports centre.

During the winter, curling tops the sports fare for young and old. It's a rare hour during the winter months when the two-sheet rink is not sounding to the swish of rocks over the ice.

The annual bonspiel, which is underway this week, incidentally, attracts rinks from such neighboring centres as Belloy, Spirit River, and Rycroft.

Wanham is a member of a Central Peace baseball loop which expects to swing into action this summer.



Wanham Curling Rink - 1941-42.



Nels Jacobsen



Wanham Ladies Going to the Spirit River Bonspiel. Left to Right: Helen Harrington, Clara Hauser, Mrs. Blonski and Marion Mann (Leriger). 1950.



Wanham's New Curling Rink.



Wanham Curlers. Left to Right: Fran Wells, George MacDonald, Elmer Sather, Del Wells.



Eve Ireland and Lily Sather.



Norman Tiernan, Mrs. Blonski, Nels Jacobsen and Clarence Nordvie.



At the Rink. Left to Right: Emil Bolduc, George MacDonald, Bud Ireland, Ken Waters.

ayers Pleas



Winners of the Rose Bowl Trophy. Left to Right: Noel Boisvert, Clara Hauser, Ed Harrington, and Elmer Johnson.



Curling Champs - Spirit River - 1951. Left to Right: Allan Sather, Gerald Blonski, Elaine Harrington and Ramona Russell.



Wanham's First Skating Rink - Geo. MacDonald's Dugout. Adolph Fortier and Ed Prevost - 1931.



Wanham Basketball Team. Back Row, Left to Right: Wally Sinkevich, Glen Olson, Bud Sather and James Culshaw. Front Row: Arthur Hoberg, Gordon Nagel, Ken Hansen.



Wanham Ladies' Tennis Club.



The Badminton Club Going to Rycroft. Included in the picture are: Joe Manson, Bernie Gant, Ida Tansem, Wally Tansem, Vera Sandercock, Yvonne Prevost, Mrs. Blonski, Doris Williams, Maggie Ungstad, Bertha Sveinungaard, Solveig Ungstad.



The Wanham Wildcats Baseball Team. Back Row, Left to Right: Buzz Sallis, Lorne Macavich, Bob Tansem, Ernie Murray, Arthur Podruzny, Ben Sallis. Front Row: David Urness, Alan Connell, Craig Sather and Kevin Putio.



Joe Lebeuf - Mr. Baseball. Joe is the owner of the Marshall-Wells store in Wanham. He was instrumental in getting Wanham's ball teams organized and registered with the Alberta Baseball Association. He is keenly interested in all sports.

SOCIAL CREDIT

\$25 Per Month Association of Alberta

Organized for the purpose of assisting members of this Association to properly register in order that they may be assisted in obtaining the promised \$25.00 per month Social Credit Dividend at the earliest possible date.

Membership Fee \$1.00 Per Family

All members of your family become members of this Association immediately you join.

Make your application today, enclosing membership fee. On receipt of fees you will obtain membership card and other information.

Address your correspondence to the—

**SOCIAL CREDIT D. A.
106b C.P.R. Building
Edmonton, Alberta**



(PLEASE POST UP)

STOP YOUR CONFOUNDED GRUMBLING—ABERHART

Premier Says He'll Pay Dividends In 14 Months Time

CALGARY, Dec. 23.—Social Credit dividends inside 14 months were promised by Premier William Aberhart in an address here on Sunday, when he said that Major C. H. Douglas would "lay the foundations" for Social Credit during the next six months, "leaving me eight more months to fulfil my pledges."

But in the meantime he had a sharp reprimand for those Social Crediters who were growing impatient over the non-arrival of their Social Dividend cheques.

"You people who are impatient, you must quit this confounded grumbling; you who are whining like undeveloped, crying children," he said. "When a house is on fire the fire is put out first and the building of a fireproof building considered afterwards."

At the same time the premier pleaded for a chance to try out his plans.

"You all know me," he said. "Give me a chance. If I find out I can't do it, I'll throw up my hands and quit. In six months you will have recall legislation. You can banish me to the tall timbers. It is only six months since I got in and you are impatient."

ASKS FOR TWO YEARS

"You can give me two years or put me out."

When debt refunding was discussed at the dominion-provincial conference at Ottawa, the Alberta delegation was the only one with a definite and detailed proposal Premier Aberhart asserted.

"There can be no opposition to our plan," Mr. Aberhart told an audience of 1,300 persons who attended to hear the premier on his first visit to the institute since he returned from Ottawa. "The wages of labor have been reduced. Why shouldn't the wages of money be reduced?"

Mr. Aberhart congratulated Premier King on the way the conference was organized. "I am very pleased with the result both actual and potential," he said. "I

Continued on Page 2, Col. 5

WANHAM SOCIAL CREDIT

by Vi Wilde

It was, I believe, in 1932-33 that people in Alberta began to hear of Major Douglas and his Social Credit System.

Since the big crash in 1930, times were really hard not only in Alberta but all over the world. People were desperate, they were looking for a solution for their financial problems.

Mr. Aberhart, a teacher and part time evangelist, began advocating the Social Credit System. A more eloquent speaker you could not find! As he explained it, Social Credit would do away with money as an exchange

and all business would be done on a credit basis. Each person would be granted a \$300.00 credit a year by the Government of Alberta. This would provide all the necessities of life for one year!

I do not think that the general public had any idea of what Social Credit was all about. On the other hand, they felt anything that would get them out of the depression should be voted for.

In 1935 Mr. Aberhart led his party to a resounding victory over the then in power United Farmers of Alberta.

Mr. Aberhart was a very able man and though his "Social Credit" theory was never put into use he did much good for Alberta.

People took politics very seriously in those days, especially it seems, here in Wanham.

Looking through some old papers, we found some minutes of Social Credit meetings held here in 1935-36.

The first meeting was dated November 20, 1935. Mr. Lampert acted as chairman for this meeting by a motion from L.A. Tansem, seconded by Leonard Metz. Carried. Moved by Fred Fowler, seconded by Bob Metz, that Alex Sandercock act as secretary at this meeting. Carried. Moved by Mr. Leonard Metz, seconded by L.A. Tansem, that Mr. A. Lampert act as president of the Wanham Social Credit group. Carried. Alex Sandercock was elected vice-president. Fred Murphy was elected secretary-treasurer. Others attending the meetig were: Lester Martell, Jack Garret and Frank Gray. Membership .50¢.

It was decided at this meeting to have a dance in the Wanham Hall to raise money for the Social Credit cause.

The following plans were made for the dance: Admission: Gentlemen, .50¢; Ladies, free. Lunch to be sold at .15¢ per person. Music: volunteer. Hopefully the hall can be hired rent free! All proceeds, after expenses, to be sent to Mr. H.W. Rogus, Secretary, Grande Prairie Constituency, Social Credit League, Beaverlodge, Alberta. Each member was given five tickets to sell. Meeting adjourned after it was decided to have the next meeting at the home of Mr. Lampert at the call of the secretary, Mr. Alex Sandercock.

Tuesday, January 7, 1936. Wanham Social Credit Group meeting held at the home of C.J. Lampert:

It was noted that Mr. Lampert acted as secretary in the absence of Fred Murphy. It was also noted that \$6.90 was realized at the Social Credit Dance. This, with the \$2.00 in membership fees taken in at the November meeting, was sent to Mr. Rogus instructing him to put it all in the membership fund. This gave the Wanham Group 17 paid up members. How they were chosen is not noted in the minutes.

It was at this meeting that the Wanham Social Credit Group showed how avidly they supported the Government in power. Seemingly they felt that Social Credit supporters were being discriminated against and wanted something to be done about it right now.

The following are some of the resolutions that were sent to the Grande Prairie Constituency Executive and the Provincial Executive, I quote:

(1) Resolved that whereas it has been the experience of this Social Credit Group that Social Credit supporters are being discriminated against in employment in Provincial Government road works as road foremen give preference to relatives and our political opponents. In one case giving work to his brother-in-law in preference to a very able man - a Social Credit supporter.

(2) That whereas one Social Credit member who was in the act of selling a supporter a ticket to a Social Credit Dance in the local Hall, was asked by the proprietor to leave the Hotel. Another case of discrimination!

(3) That whereas practically all Provincial employees were appointed to their positions prior to the Social Credit administration and were political opponents and in the opinion of our group are a detriment to Social Credit policy slowing up the movement with their "it can

not be done" policy should be dismissed.

(4) Now, therefore, be it resolved:

That this Wanham Social Group hereby endorse the by-laws as passed at the Social Credit Constituency Convention held at Grande Prairie on November 15, 1935.

We request our Grande Prairie executive and Mr. Sharp, our M.L.A., to take action and enforce the by-laws as passed at said meeting and at the next sitting of the Executive dismiss all Road Foremen, Road Engineers, all Provincial Land Office employees, Provincial Court House employees, Department of Agriculture employees and all other Government employees in this constituency hired by the former Alberta Legislature. Also ask Mr. Sharp, M.L.A., to do all possible to replace Provincial employees in Edmonton with Social Credit supporters especially department heads as neither in ancient or modern history is there any record of a political party attaining their objective or retaining power without such changes being made.

(5) That if Executive or Mr. Sharp refuse to act upon the above mentioned replacements, the Wanham Social Credit Group demand - (unquote, all 17 of them) that a Convention be held not later than January 31st, 1936, so that Social Credit delegates will be able to enforce such replacements.

(6) That if experienced Social Credit supporters can not be obtained to fill the aforementioned positions, recent graduates of Alberta Universities who state or are known to be one hundred percent Social Credit supporters be engaged.

(7) Another motion suggested that the president of the Wanham Social Credit Group write Mr. Aberhart supporting his suggestion for a Social Credit newspaper as all present newspapers are all prejudiced against the Social Credit movement and are attempting to undermine it.

We can not find any records of further Social Credit meetings of the Wanham group. Maybe all their resolutions were acted on and they were satisfied or just possibly none of them were acted upon and they gave up in disgust.

To the best of our knowledge only Mr. Leonard Metz is still with us. He lives in a Nursing Home in Grande Prairie.

U.F.A. CO-OP

by Joyce Sinkwich

The summer of 1946 saw Maple Leaf Petroleum increasing the Bulk Fuel outlets in the Peace River area. Wanham was fortunate in being one of the points chosen, and the business established on property within the village. A. Leriger was the first agent and the outlet boasted 7000 gallon storage, all underground. Other agents through the years have been: J. Rutherford, William Aley, A. Kozuback, S. Skirzyk, M. Sinkwich, D. Hall and at present 1980, Albert Wells.

In the early '50's the outlet was moved from the heart of the village to it's present site on Highway 49 at the entry to Wanham. At this time a service bay was added and also two retail pumps.



The Wanham 4-H Club. Standing, Back Row, Left to Right: Visitor, A.O. Fimrite, Stan Stepaniuk, Taras Putio, Dennis Bush, John Christensen, Edward Jakubowski, 3 Visitors. Standing, Front Row: Beverley Fowler, Edward Pierog, Carl Gilmour, Ted Pierog. Seated at Left: unknown, Harvey Laughland, unknown. At Right: John Pierog, Barbara Karpinski, Helen Sveinunggaard, Walter Nagel.



Wanham Junior Forest Wardens. Leaders seated in front, Left to Right: Dennis Sather, Wally Tansem, George Brewster, Jim Rutherford, Bill Feniak, Gunder Sveinunggaard. Boys included are: Glen Sveinunggaard, Richard Shaw, Brian Podruzny, Kim Scott, Ronnie Podruzny, Roger Lebeuf, Randy Kaspro, Doug Sather, Brian Raskauskus, Andrew Arcand, Michael Hillaby, Ronnie Bjorgan, Byron Thompson, Kevin Rode, Glenn Scott, Philip Roteliuk, Greg Lebeuf, Willie Evenson, Randy Melnyk, Michael Lane, Richard Roteliuk, LaVerne Keller, Joe Raskauskus.

1980 sees this station with 65,000 gallons storage above ground and 6,000 gallons underground that serves the

pumps. We have seen the U.F.A. grow with our community and facilitate the changes of time.

JUNE 30, 1938

LEGION ELECTS OFFICERS

The annual meeting of the Wanham Branch of the Canadian Legion was held in Heart Valley on Saturday, June 18, when the following officers were elected for the coming year: J.R. Babbs, Belloy, President; J.A. McLean, Heart Valley, Vice-president; E.J. Harrington, Wanham, Secretary; George MacDonald, C. Morris, J. Munro, P. McNee, and W. Francis, Executive. After the meeting a dainty lunch was served by the ladies.

Grande Prairie Herald Tribune
December, 1963

Name New Legion Slate At Wanham

WANHAM — The Wanham Branch of the Canadian Legion were honored to have as their guest speaker District Commander Mr. Jim Reynolds, of Fairview, at their re-organization meeting held Friday, December 6 at the home of Bud Ireland. The meeting was held in the rumpus room.

Zone Commander Ernie White of Rycroft was also present. Elections of officers took place as follows: president — Frank Podruzny, vice - president — Bud Ireland, secretary — Dick Greene, Sgt. at Arms — Ed Harrington.

On the executive are Norman McDonald, A. Elhorn, C. Polard and J. McInnis.

Following the meeting, the ladies joined the men when lunch was enjoyed.

Nine ladies were present December 6 at the home of Mrs. Eve Ireland at a reorganization meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Canadian Legion. President Mrs. Jo McCallum and Secretary Mrs. Eve Ireland were asked to carry on in office for the 1964 term.

It was decided to order a pole and stand for the flag. The ladies are currently conducting a raffle for a turkey, the draw to be made December 19 at the school concert if permission is granted.

Mrs. Nettie White was a guest. The next meeting will be at Ireland's January 7 at 8 p.m. at which time it is hoped to have District Commander — Mrs. Audrey Ander, Grande Prairie, present.

THE BELLOY BRANCH NO. 258 TO THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

by Don Berner and Dot Brissard

The idea to form a Legion Branch in Belloy was conceived at the farm of Clyde Polard, a veteran who still resides in the area. Several veterans gathered there along with Major Pym, who gave advice concerning the forming of a Branch to the Royal Canadian Legion. Later, an organizational meeting was called in the Belloy Hall on August 18, 1951 with many veterans in attendance.

Following is a copy of the application for a charter, along with the Charter members. The Branch received the Charter on September 11, 1951.

Eventually, the Branch purchased an old log building (a former Anglican Church) from John Peters for \$50.00. This was moved to Belloy and with work bees was put on a foundation and renovated to become the meeting place for the Branch.

During the early years of the Lassiter Project, the Belloy Branch was instrumental in working with the Alberta Government to overcome many problems which veterans were having on the Project. In 1959, the Branch also wrote letters of protest to Gerald Baldwin, M.L.A., and to the Board of Transport Commissions to protest the closing of the Belloy Station by the N.A.R. Unfortunately, the station was eventually closed.

Because of a shortage of classroom space, the Spirit River School Division rented the Belloy Legion Hut in 1954 and classes were taught there by Harold Sather.

The Legion Branch also made the building available at no charge to any organization for non-profit meetings, etc. The Belloy Presbyterian Church held its first Church Services there for a considerable time.

The Belloy Legion built a skating rink in Belloy and then turned it over to the Community.

In 1970, the Belloy and Wanham Legion Branches purchased a wheel chair for the use of one of their members. The wheel chair is still available to any member of these communities requiring this facility.

During the Golden Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion in Canada, the Belloy Branch sold many tulip bulbs to local gardeners for a nominal fee. The golden tulips will bloom for many years to come in local gardens.

The Belloy Legion Branch sponsored a Christmas Party annually for all the children in the area. The

children supplied the entertainment in various forms of recitations, songs and skits. The Legion provided candy bags, etc., raising money by raffles supported by the community.

The November 11 Remembrance Day banquets and dances, sponsored jointly by the Belloy and Wanham Legion Branches and held alternately in Belloy and Wanham were always a great success.

In 1975, at a Zone Rally, the Belloy Branch presented Life Membership Pins to Lenard Blois and Jack Laughland. Twenty-five Year Membership Pins were also given, posthumously, to the memory of Ken Botham and Roy Keller. Their wives accepted the pins.

In 1977, because of lack of member interest and active participation, the Belloy Branch decided to turn in their Charter. Many of the members transferred to the Wanham Legion Branch No. 120 and continue to work for veterans and their families and the good of the community.

Nostalgic memories of pleasant times spent in comradeship in the Belloy Legion Hut will always remain in the hearts of many local veterans and their families.

Following is an incomplete list of elected officers received from the Alberta Command:

BELLOY BRANCH NO. 258

Officers of Branch

by Don Berner and Dot Brissard

<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Secretary</i>
1951	L. Blois	L.H. Scott
1953	William Spice	E.H. Johnston
1958	S. Urness	William Sallis
1959	S. Urness	A.R. Caouette
1960	W.J. Laughland	A.R. Caouette
1961	D.T. Berner	S.A. Urness
1966	C.K. Botham	S.A. Urness
1967	C.K. Botham	S.A. Urness
1967	Roy Keller	D.T. Berner
1972	Lawrence Scott	Robert Blouin
1973	Roy Keller	Robert Blouin
1975	T. Bridges	Robert Blouin
1976	S.A. Urness	C.A. Polard

This is all the information we have on the elected officers of this branch. We can only assume that the missing years were under the guidance of those preceding.

Charter cancelled in 1977.



Belloy Legion members working on the Legion Hut. The Hut - formerly the old Anglican Church - was moved into Belloy from its location on the corner south of Belloy.



Hughie Johnston and Jack Laughland.



Hugh McPherson, Len Blois, Jack Laughland and Ken Botham.





Red Cross Work at the Home of Helen Harrington. Left to Right: Lena Bush, Mrs. Wiegel, Mrs. Francis.



Red Cross Ladies. Back Row, Left to Right: Mae Rutherford, Terry Leriger, Helen Harrington. Front Row: Yvonne Prevost, Ollie Webber and Mary Dofher.

WANHAM PROVINCIAL GRAZING RESERVE

*by C.E. Haglund
August 4, 1970*

The Wanham Provincial Grazing Reserve, located 15 miles north of Wanham between the Peace and the Burnt Rivers in Townships 79 and 80, Ranges 2 and 3, W6 Meridian, began operating in 1960.

Covering an area of 15,242 acres of the old Lassiter project, the Grazing Reserve is currently providing 5,455 Animal Unit Months of grazing for 46 local patrons. In addition to the cultivated acreage of the veterans' homesteads that was seeded to grass when the Reserve was formed, an additional 3,260 acres have been broken and seeded to tame pasture. A further 1,100 acres have been cleared ready for breaking in 1971.

Development of the Reserve was initiated by the Provincial Government. In 1962 an A.R.D.A. agreement

was negotiated between the Federal and Provincial Governments whereby the costs of development were shared equally between the two governments.

The Grazing Reserve is under the administration of the Grazing Reserves Section of the Department of Lands and Forests' Land Division. Grazing Reserve Manager J.R. Dumas lives at the Reserve headquarters during the time the Reserve is in operation. Cattle are brought to the Reserve in the spring, where they are inspected by a veterinarian, ear tagged, recorded and put on their respective pastures. Breeding stock, non-breeding stock and steers are placed on separate pastures, which are paired to permit rotational grazing.

During the summer, The Reserve Manager looks after the cattle, providing treatment for minor diseases where necessary, and ensuring that salt and mineral supplement is available.

In the fall, the patrons gather at the corrals to separate the cattle according to ownership, after which they are taken home.

In 1970 it cost a patron \$2.80 per Animal Unit Month to graze his stock on the Reserve, excluding Association fees and breeding fees which are set by the Advisory Board.

Supervisor of Grazing Reserves, S.G. Klumph and Field Supervisor, W.J. Bush, are assisted in the administration of the Reserve by a Board of Directors elected by the patrons. The Directors, who form an Advisory Board, with President Harry Heck and Secretary Sanford Urness, have a voice in the operational procedures of the Reserve, and are responsible for the breeding as well as the Compensation for Loss programs.

WANHAM CREATIVE WRITERS

by Lily Sather

"The Alberta Government has announced the formation of a division of creative writing to advise and encourage writers in the province.

John Patrick Gillese of Edmonton, a free-lance writer, was named as supervisor of the division which comes under the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation. The aim of the division is to provide a broad general base of professional encouragement for writers and to develop, co-ordinate and more fully utilize their talents."

The above is part of an item that appeared in one of our newspapers in the fall of 1971 and which was spotted by a local resident who quickly got in touch with Mr. Gillese.

Particulars were soon received from Edmonton and when approximately 20 "would-be-writers" expressed their interest in forming a writers workshop here, the Department was notified.

More correspondence was received from Mr. Gillese from which the following excerpts were taken:-

"I am delighted with the news that you have over 20 people who are interested in forming a Creative Writing Workshop in your area; and to start it off on the right foot, I am sending you Mrs. Margaret Coleman Johnson - the best in the field. You will find her a perfect teacher - extremely sympathetic to new writers - and with a thorough knowledge of the problems involved, and

equally skilled in forming new workshops."

So, in November of 1971 the only community based Creative Writing group in the Peace River country was formed and the name "Wanham Creative Writers" was chosen. Wanham's bid had been the first received in Edmonton and thus we became the "Pilot Project" of the division.

The following year a Writers Workshop for the north was proposed by the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation and the Wanham Creative Writers were deeply involved in its organization. The first Northland Writers Workshop became a reality and was held in the Grande Prairie Motor Inn on August 18 and 19, 1972. Over 100 interested writers were registered.

Many outstanding author-instructors including: Dorothy P. Barnhouse, Dr. J.W. Chalmers, Mary E. Dawe, J.P. Gillese, Dr. George Hardy, Margaret Coleman Johnson and Delbert Young, instructed and assisted those participating.

One year later the second large workshop was held, this time in the basement of the Golden Star Restaurant in Grande Prairie.

Since 1973 several smaller workshops have been held at Wanham and Grande Prairie.

Writing courses both in fiction and non-fiction became available through the Department at a very nominal price. Several Wanham Creative Writers took advantage of these.

In the 10 years since its formation the Wanham Creative Writers have turned out some very fine writing, a good deal of which has been published in the Peace, nationally and internationally. And - a good many of its members are presently involved in seeing that this book, about Wanham and its people, Grooming the Grizzly is a good one!

THE WANHAM EXPERIENCE

by Wallace Tansem

On February 21, 1970, the small Wanham newspaper ceased publication. The closing editorial read, "Our community still has a defeated attitude. Somehow the thought settles deeper and deeper that we are finished. That we are in our death throes and that there is nothing we can do to save it. This is absolutely correct if we continue on our present path and maintain our present attitudes. But it need not be so providing we say it is not so and determine to do something about it and make no mistake we can do something."

Two things slipped a cog into place for many of us in Wanham. The first was the closing of the lumberyard which had been in the community for 40 years and the selling of the buildings to an outsider for a low sum without giving the community a chance to obtain the buildings. The second was the calling of the annual Board of Trade meeting and the Hall meeting for the same night at the same place and at the same time. When it was realized by the respective presidents, they decided to kill two birds with one stone by having the Board of Trade meet at 7:30 p.m. and the Hall board meet at 8:30. Approximately 10 people came out and it was noted from



Wally Tansem - First President of C.O.C.O. Other presidents have been: Dennis Sather, Jim Rutherford, Lawrence Laughy, Jim Sather, Lorraine Putio, Wally Sinkevich, Taras Putio, Sam Sather, Sandy Bennett, Ray Waters. President - 1982 - Joe Lebeuf.

the minutes that the Board of Trade owed the Hall board \$550 and that they had no funds on hand with which to repay the loan. After much discussion they decided they would just have to put something on to raise money in the near future and would repay as much as possible at that time. The secretary was instructed to write to the Hall board and notify them of this decision. The meeting closed and the Hall board convened. No one left the building and no one came in. They were the same people but now they were the Hall board and they were extremely annoyed at that Board of Trade. They owed them \$550 and had paid nothing back on the loan and as far as they knew they were going to pay them nothing. They had not as yet received the letter from the secretary so how could they know officially.

I believe the closing of the lumberyard and the absurdity of this meeting which hit some of us at coffee the next day sparked us to call a few people together to discuss what if anything could be done. It is a terrible feeling to be a part of a dying community. To watch as business places close, see friends leave, not because they wish to but because they have to because of economic reasons. Mainly we were concerned that night at our meeting with the closing of the lumberyard. But out of our discussion there developed a much broader consensus of what was wrong with our community.

The double meeting was recalled and someone made the observation that maybe we did not need both the Board of Trade and the Hall board as the same people were involved. This opened the floodgates to the questioning of all the organizations operating within the village and area. Each of these required a meeting and people were meeting'd to death with nothing being accomplished. Someone suggested, "Why not disband the works of them. We could form one organization that would speak for our people. Plan one project and carry it

through by working together and then go on to something else." And so C.O.C.O., the Community of Coordinating Organizations, came into being.

In the formation of C.O.C.O. two methods were used in dealing with the clubs and groups operating at that time. All of those with a local executive such as the Hall board, the Board of Trade, ball clubs, hockey clubs were disbanded. All other groups having provincial or national ties were asked to join as affiliated clubs. Organizations such as the Canadian Legion, Junior Forest Wardens, Catholic Women's League, in all 16 such groups originally joined. They did not change their operation. These clubs were given free use of COCO facilities. The only obligation for those groups was that they encourage their members to serve on the COCO executive and to report to the monthly meeting to tell the rest of the community what their club was doing and what were their plans.

COCO sponsors several events and social gatherings throughout the year to raise funds. All money raised goes into COCO funds and COCO pays the bills. Individual dues from curling, skating, etc., go to COCO. Hall rents, banquet proceeds received by the banquet committee go to COCO. A main executive is elected each year consisting of the usual. The president is elected for one year and cannot succeed him or herself. Too often we found that once elected a person was stuck with the job for life. A new president brings with him a new group of friends and new ideas. Directors; three for each facility are elected. Our present operating facilities with directors consist now of the Hall, curling rink and skating rink complex, museum, sports ground, and tennis court. The directors are in charge of their particular facility and report to the monthly meeting. All who attend the meetings can hear what is happening at these facilities.

Committees are formed as needed, some continuing such as banquet, industrial incentive, advertising, ploughing match, with others of shorter duration delegated to do a particular task. These are volunteer committees. Each has a chairman who reports to the monthly meeting. Again people are kept informed. Savings under the COCO concept are realized continually by the common use of material and equipment. Building material, chairs, fridges, grills may be used wherever

necessary in the whole community. Food or booth supplies can be used as needed at a booth or at the hall or curling rink.

What has been the result of our operation under COCO since 1970? A new community hall has been built with complete kitchen facilities seating area for 300 people. A meeting room upstairs. A conservative value of \$70,000. It is paid for. Artificial ice was installed at the curling (old) rink and many improvements made to a value of \$20,000. Paid for. An additional seven acres of land purchased for the fair grounds, gas and water added, a second ball diamond in use, new fence. More than \$10,000 in improvements to the grounds. Paid for. Ball and hockey teams are completely outfitted with uniforms and equipment. Their travelling expenses paid. Wanham has had nine ball teams in the past eight years represent the Peace country at Provincial Championships. Wanham has hosted three Provincial tournaments so the expense has been considerable. A new tennis court was completed and cost \$15,000 in addition to volunteer labor. It is paid for.

This year (1981) saw the completion of a skating - curling - crafts complex with a cost of \$800,000. A debenture held by the Village of Wanham for \$180,000 is the total owing. This building will be used as a display area for the Plowing Matches each year.



Work Bee at C.O.C.O. Sports Ground. Left to Right: Stan Skirzyk, Albert Leriger and Spike Leriger.



President Jim Rutherford Burning the Mortgage on C.O.C.O. Hall. Left to Right: Naida Sather, Jim Rutherford and Joyce Sinkwich.

Land for the Grizzly Bear Prairie Museum site has been purchased and the "Francis" original log house moved onto the site and restored. Many artifacts have been collected and are being restored.

These are only some of the major undertakings of COCO. Add to this the new booths built, painting and general improvements to all the facilities and one can partially grasp what has been accomplished.

While it is true that recreation has been the main thrust of the organization it was realized early that if the community was to survive we must initiate some type of industry that would be of benefit to the community in the way of supplying jobs and would also fit in with the agricultural context of the area. In this we have succeeded to a much greater degree than any had thought possible. An alfalfa plant valued at more than 1 1/2 million dollars



Hallowe'en Charity Masquerade Ball - C.O.C.O. Hall.

has been built and is operating providing jobs for people. Honey producers have utilized some of the abandoned buildings. A gas co-op office in Wanham is supplying gas to a large area.

Spin-off from the success of COCO has been evident in other ways. The village has built a new modern village office which also houses an Agricultural Service Board. The streets have been hard surfaced. One church has built a new chapel, the other a new manse. The Alberta Wheat Pool has built a new house. Senior citizens have become involved and extremely active. They have formed a New Horizons group and have their own equipped drop-in centre complete with carpenter shop and recreation supplies. Canada Post Office has built a new office. Eight senior citizens housing units were built. In almost all of these COCO has been the catalyst.

At one of the initial meetings of COCO, interested groups were asked to present plans for a major project that they wished to see undertaken. Good sound proposals were presented relating to an arena, a new hall, artificial ice in the curling rink. By secret ballot the artificial ice was favoured. Hall people were disappointed not to get a new hall as were arena people and others but they accepted the majority decision. They forgot their differences and went to work. Today an arena and curling complex are a reality, a new hall has been built, a tennis court completed, a museum operating.

COCO initiated the Alberta Provincial Ploughing Match. Now, in its eleventh year, this event has generated tremendous interest throughout Canada. Our people have gone to Quebec, Ontario, B.C., New Brunswick, and P.E.I.

Wanham hosted the Canadian Championship June 14 to 17, 1978. This was hosted along with the Provincial Match. Last year the match drew 10,000 people to our small village and this year we expect to be inundated. If you wish to see something a bit different plan to attend. In addition to the ploughing one can see and participate in hawg calling, tobacco spitting, threshing, stooking, tractor pulling, horse ploughing, bag tying and a variety of old-time things.

On July 1st to 3rd Homecoming '78 was held. This saw hundreds of people again converging on Wanham. More

than 1400 people came home. These two events alone required hundreds of hours of volunteer work. Add to this volunteer work the involvement of our people in the planning of curling bonspiels, ball tournaments, banquets and dances and other social functions and then add again the work involved in community projects such as the tennis court, a Devonian grant work and it is little wonder that Wanham has been called "the most community-minded community in Alberta".



Official Opening - Grizzly Bear Prairie Museum - June, 1981.

What has been the key to the success of COCO? There are several related reasons we believe. The monthly meeting at which people can be directly involved in the decision-making process. There are no dues charged. One has only to be at the meeting to take part and most important to vote. The one-year term of the office of president. It has had the effect of broadening the support for COCO and its plans. Each president has brought with him or her a circle of friends to the organization. These have in turn become involved and supporters. The structure of directors and committees. This combines rather than isolates facilities and interest groups. Prior to COCO people developed an allegiance to their particular club. Often there was open hostility in their efforts to further their own particular group. There was little thought towards the whole community. The free use concept for facilities by all groups, especially the community hall, has fostered a mutual feeling of trust and belonging. This is especially true as it relates to people outside of the village proper. COCO could not have been successful without the support of the country people. For the past two years the executive has consisted of non-village residents. The hall is there. It is heated. It belongs to the whole community and not to a board that jealously guards it and the bank account while youth groups and quilting clubs and 4-H children pay rent to meet elsewhere. The Ploughing Match has been extremely successful and this has given the people a sense of a more than ordinary and unique accomplishment. Where else in Alberta can you attend a ploughing match?

Surely the letters we have received from countless other communities throughout Canada asking for information

on COCO have given us a sense of breaking new ground. Better still have been the letters from communities to whom we have sent information telling us they have formed similar organizations to halt the demise of their villages. TOS - Tompkins Operation Survival in Saskatchewan of WEBCO which included the communities of Wishart, Emerald and Bankend. Certainly we have realized a feeling of pride in what has been accomplished by simply working together. The emphasis that has always been placed by COCO on the value of public relations and good publicity has been a major factor in developing a sense of "community" within the area. The people in Wanham are probably little different than people everywhere. We have almost every ethnic group, several religions with each of these people bringing something of value to the community. They have talents that only need to be given a chance to be applied.

The Recreation Board in Wanham has, I suppose, a reduced function from many other boards. They are not concerned with the raising of money. They need not develop programs for recreation. The requests for recreational facilities or the programs originate at the monthly meetings. Committees are formed as needed and function until the facility is operating and under the directorship. The Recreation Board applies for grant money and distributes it. Because COCO operates most of the facilities it is relatively easy for them to allocate funds.

COCO has been an experience. From the first hectic year of chartering our course, of plod-alongs, of turkey shoots, of snowmobile rally's to the present day plowing match and homecoming it has been a lesson in giving and serving and participating with others. What has happened has not been a dream but reality because people have worked together for the good of all, because people have utilized the best possible resource at their disposal - themselves.



The New Complex - 1981.



C.O.C.O. Logo.



Grace Sather Throwing the First Rock - Official Opening of the Complex - 1981.



Laying the Groundwork for the new C.O.C.O. Wanham and Area Recreation Complex.



Hockey Game - Official Opening - 1981.



Elmer Sather checks his furrows in the Peace Farm

Power event at the Wanham provincial plowing matches held yesterday and today.

Plowing competition kicks off

By MARY DYKSTRA
of our staff

WANHAM

"The people of Wanham today have made history."

This was the view of Alberta's Rt. Hon. Lt.-Gov. Grant MacEwan as he officially opened a two-day provincial plowing match here yesterday, the first in Alberta in 15 years.

About 400 persons yesterday attended the competitions which took place on a 200-acre field.

Mr. MacEwan was accompanied in the opening ceremonies by Agriculture Minister Henry Ruste, Spirit River MLA A.O. Fimrite and Wanham mayor Albert Leriger.

Mr. MacEwan said he was delighted to think that a community such as Wanham still had something that "was home-grown, and intensely original."

He said that "Wanham will be better known throughout the province than ever before."

The plowing match, which began at 11 a.m. yesterday, is judged by J.L. Reid of Edmonton, Chester Oxtoby of Olds, Fred Parkinson of Edmonton and Ernie Lewis of Winterburn.

A fly-in breakfast for the Peace River Region Flying Farmers started the day as three pilots brought their light aircraft down on the field for the meal.

John Woodburn of Grimshaw was the pilot who came the farthest, while Harvey Dick of Peoria came in closest to the hidden time. Mr. Dick landed at 9:59 a.m. — only a second later than the hidden time of 9:58 a.m. Earl Lang of Peoria was the eldest pilot to fly in.

One official said gusty winds at the time of the fly-in may have prevented other pilots from coming in.

Other events of the day included a horseshoe tournament and a stooking contest.

In stooking, Mr. MacEwan matched muscle with Mayor Leriger in a time of 3:14 minutes for three stooks.

In the men's stooking, Halvor Sveinunggaard of Wanham placed first with John Pierog of Belloy taking second. In the laides, Ruth Lang came in first against Mrs. Henry Davis.

Gary Gunderson of Grande Prairie took place first in the horseshoe tournament against Charlie Stumphs of Badheart.

Four of six plowing events were completed yesterday.

Sanford Sorgen of Wanham placed first in the Dave Ross and Son open event, with Stan Sather of Wanham placing second. Gunder Sveinunggaard of Wanham came in third.

In the Peace Farm Power open event, Bill Klimko of Wanham took first place with Elmer Sather of Wanham placing second. Sanford Sorgen placed third.

In the Blue Flame Propane event, open to mayors and dignitaries, Mr. MacEwan placed first, with Mr. Ruste coming in second. Mayor Leriger came in third with A.O. Fimrite placing fourth.

In the Lewis Department Store event, open to the press and radio, Gordon Aalborg of the Edmonton Journal placed first with Bob Zens of radio CKYL in Peace River coming second. Bruce Davis of CFGP came third while Jack Howell of the Call of the Land series placed fourth. The match continues today.



*Rev. Ken Innes -
Chairman of the First
Plowing Match Com-
mittee.*

THE COCO PLOWING MATCH

by Reverend Ken Innes

There are two phrases that have always been part of my life:

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained," and

"With God, all things are possible."

It was in the spring of 1971. Wanham's unique organization, COCO, wasn't quite a year old. The above phrases were my motivation. They drove me onward in the search for a project that would make COCO really viable and Wanham a community with pride in itself that would have recognition throughout Alberta.

I was searching for something unique and my mind played with different dreams and ideas. One day at the Wanham Cafe, while having coffee with other people in the community, I mentioned to Wally Tansem (with whom I had become very close and who was a driving force in the community) that COCO should have a plowing match.

The others gathered around the table were somewhat startled and asked, "What's a plowing match?" As sometimes happens, the more I discussed the idea, the more enthusiastic and convinced I became that with COCO and the community behind it, a plowing match could be a great thing.

I was born and raised on a farm in Ontario and, as a young lad, I had often had a desire to plow in the plowing matches in that province. Also, I had gone to see the Portage La Prairie Plowing Match in Manitoba, while there as a student minister in 1967. While plowing my Dad's fields at home, I always took great pride in plowing straight and doing a good job. Out of all these things, the idea of having a plowing match in Wanham grew.

From the coffee table in the spring of '71, the idea took hold and, with the help of people like Wally Tansem, Stan Sather and Denny Sather, the idea spread and more and more people thought it had merit. I dreamed dreams of the match becoming a great spectacle and growing to a smaller version of the huge, International Plowing Match in Ontario, which covers over 130 acres just in displays. To me, the vehicle of the plowing match could become the means of giving Wanham something unique, something to have pride in, something to raise money, something to draw people to Wanham and make



Plowing Match Committee - 1974-75. Standing, Left to Right: Bud Sather, Jim Sather, Rev. Ken Innes, Bill Lunn, Bill Klimko, Dennis Sather, Stan Sather, Sam Sather, Taras Putio. Seated: Vi Wilde, Sharon Zamorsky, Kathy McKenzie, Florence Sather. Front Row: Joyce Laursen and Lorraine Putio.

Wanham a known community.

So with Wally, Stan and Denny behind me, I took the idea to a COCO general meeting. Giving the members some idea of the potential and what it would entail in regard to land site, facilities and costs, the idea became a reality and plans were laid for the first plowing match.

Langnes Co-op Farm offered the use of a sod field southwest of Wanham. The date set for the match was August 23 and 24. To seal the idea, I said we would try to get sponsors for the various plowing events. With sponsors we would not have to put up too much money and, if the idea failed, we would not lose much.

Next, I travelled to Edmonton to find out what information and help we might get from the Department of Agriculture. Again, the idea of a plowing match had to be sold. Little information could be secured and the Department's attitude at first was negative, with comments like, "Why a plowing match in Alberta? We don't want to promote plowing in this province."

I pointed out that the farmers in the Wanham area do use plows because of the large amount of land in grass



Aerial View of Wanham Plowing Match - 1977.

crops. I tried to get across the idea of the tremendous benefit a plowing match would be to the Wanham community. And, I also stated that by having a plowing match, we would not only be promoting the use and skill of plowing, but also the adjustment and use of other machinery. Later meetings in Edmonton resulted in the Department slowly getting behind the idea and providing some financial support and judges for plowing.

I received some information from the Ontario Plowing Association. From a booklet advertising the International Plowing Match held in Lindsay, Ontario, we put together a set of rules and regulations and classes for the first Alberta Provincial Plowing Match. At this match we would declare the Alberta Champion and Runner-up, since there were no other plowing matches in Alberta. This met with the Department of Agriculture's approval.

There were still many hurdles to be overcome. We had to persuade farmers to participate and get sponsors for the plowing events. Again, the idea had to be sold to prospective competitors and machinery dealers. For the first match, we also had a Queen of the Furrow Competition and Horseshoe Pitching.

The first Plowing Match saw the following people serving as Committee Directors, under myself as Chairman: Terry Leriger, Stan Sather, Wally Tansem, Sam Parlee, Earl Lang, Bill Feniak, Wayne Grusie, Bud Sather, Art Krefting, Dick Anderson, Faye Jacobsen, Alice Renner and Neil Paulovich. It was through their devotion and long hours spent in discussions and working out details, as well as their leadership, along with the splendid co-operation of the Wanham community, that the Match achieved the success it did the first year.

Wally Tansem did an absolutely splendid job on publicity and the whole community got behind the committee to make preparations. Buildings were moved from the sportsground to the plowing field and plowing plots were staked.

Finally, the big day arrived. It was cold and windy ... so windy that the banner over the grounds entrance was torn down. The match was officially opened by the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, Grant MacEwan. I don't know yet how I survived those two days. I must have walked millions of miles and talked thousands of words, trying to help the competitors and convincing others to enter. Funny thing was that I knew very little



Judging the Furrows. Left to Right: Two visiting judges and Roland Witte, District Agriculturist.

about competitive plowing. But out of it all, we had great interest and a large number of entries. The response from the media and those visiting our first Match was tremendous. Albert Leriger emerged as the first Alberta Champion plowman and Bill Klimko as Reserve Champion.

In his address, Grant MacEwan gave the Match a tremendous boost. His words were certainly an indication of the future success of the event.

"I can't help but reflect upon one of my earlier trips to Wanham. It was a number of years ago. I do know, at that time, when you mentioned Wanham, you were thinking of a depressed area. What I've seen today, the jaunt through the countryside and what you've done by way of community spirit and community effort, is a transformation and a revelation that is just wonderful. I confess I don't know the whole story about COCO, but it is something that is homegrown and intensely original. My admiration reaches its peak when I see people do things such as you have done. You have something here that must just fill you with pride."

Yes, it filled the Wanham community with pride and the gears were set in motion for bigger days ahead and bigger dreams.

That fall, Albert, Bill and I drove to Ontario so Albert and Bill could compete in the Canadian Plowing Championships. To this day, I cannot help but admire the determination, the bearing of laughter, that Albert and Bill withstood. None of us knew about the competition plows and opening splits, and neither of them were familiar with three-point hitch plows. Yes, their lands were roughly plowed, compared to those plowed by the other competitors. But, we learned a great deal and the seeds were sown for better plowing in Alberta in the years ahead.

In the fall of 1971, plans were made for holding the second Alberta Provincial Plowing Match on June 16 and 17, 1972. New events were added, rules were clarified, and a new event, tractor pulling, was planned for. The site of the match was Albert Leriger's land west of the sportsground. The weather was great, a large crowd



Plowing.



*Whaley Mar - Brooks,
Alberta - Winner in Plow-
ing Competition - 1976.*

attended and the match's future was assured.

The 1973 Match saw further expansion. Now, it became a three-day event. The machinery dealers were getting behind the concept and, that year, the machinery display really added to the event. Spectators were coming from all parts of the province. The plowing had greatly improved and the competition had become much keener.

The 1974 Match was larger yet, and for the first time I undertook to realize one of my hopes and dreams as I entered the plowing competitions. Since the various directorships were all chaired by capable workers, I was able to spend time plowing. Since that year I have been competing annually and thoroughly enjoying it.

The 1975 Match was the last in which I would serve as chairman. In answer to God's call in September, I began my ministry in Christ's name at Brussels, Ontario. The chairperson now became Sharon Zamorsky. Under her splendid and able leadership, the Match has continued to grow larger and larger. I had the opportunity to attend and compete in the 1976 Match. My heart was filled to overbrimming with the tremendous job the Wanham community had done and was still doing. It is simply magnificent to see people working together, giving their all and developing the spirit as the people of Wanham community have done. In 1976 I saw the realization of a dream, an idea, that started over a cup of coffee five years earlier.

In 1978, we reached a peak with Alberta hosting the Canadian Plowing Championships. Back in 1972, as



Horse Plowing Event - Lloyd Wendland - 1976.

Alberta Director of the Canadian Plowing Council, I had convinced COCO and the Council that Alberta should have the privilege of hosting the '78 Canadian. This was agreed and I am looking forward with keen anticipation to attending this Match.

The idea, the dream, is now a reality. Reality because of the spirit and working together of the people in the Wanham community. The results are fact, and show what a community can do by pulling together, helping one another, and believing in the phrases as I do.

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained." and

"With God, all things are possible."



Horse Plowing Event - Lynn Neufeld - 1976.

UPDATE, THE COCO PLOWING MATCH

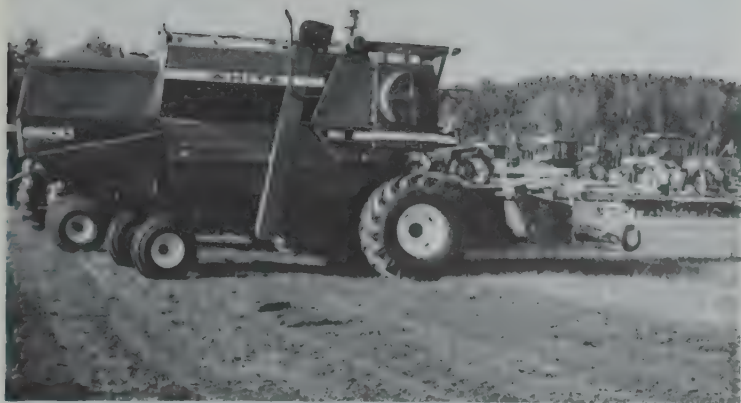
by Sharon Zamorsky

Reverend Ken Innes wrote the above article just prior to COCO hosting the 24th Canadian Plowing Championships in conjunction with their 8th annual Alberta Provincial Plowing Match. I'm sure the entire community joins me in expressing our gratitude to Ken, not only for the original idea, but for the numerous hours he put into those first few matches.

In June of 1978, COCO and our community really did Alberta proud. The Honorable Eugene Whelan, Federal Minister of Agriculture, flew in to officially open the Match and, again, Grant MacEwan, now out of office but holding a special spot in our hearts since our first match, was guest speaker at the banquet. Our 1977 Alberta Champion, earning the right to compete in the World Plowing Championships in Ireland in 1979. The executive and provincial directors of the Canadian Plowing Council were duly impressed with the manner in which Wanham hosted this most prestigious event.

1978 was my last year as chairperson. Like Ken, I was only able to fill the position adequately because of the tremendous support of the executive and directors who served under me, as well as the entire community who all pitched in and did their part. In 1979 Jim Sather was elected chairman and is still ably filling this post.

Our 10th annual Plowing Match was the most successful to date, clearing over \$20,000. Alberta Agriculture still plays an important role by supplying the



Machinery Display at the Plowing Match.

plowing judges and several grants through our status as an Agricultural Society. Machinery dealers, businesses and individuals still add their special touch to our match by sponsoring events and filling our display area. This year COCO has constructed a large arena/curling complex which will be utilized for several events during future matches.

For the 1980 match, we held the following plowing classes: 2 Alberta Championship events, an Alberta Junior Championship event, 4 events for men, 2 events for women, an event for school students, a novice event, a non-farmer event, 2 horse plowing events (one using the walking plow, the other using the sulky or gang plow), an antique tractor event, and a media event.

Special awards were given for best crown, best finish, best all-round plowman, best groomed team and best handled team. And, of course, we still hold our Queen of the Furrow competition.

In 1974, Shannon's of Sexsmith donated \$500 to COCO in memory of Joe Shannon and in recognition of



Tractor Pull - 1980. Gravel piles in the background are at the location of the Recreation Complex.

COCO's contribution to agriculture through the hosting of the Plowing Match. In 1975, COCO set up the "Joe Shannon Memorial Award" with this fund. This award is presented annually to the person who contributes the most to the current match. The winner is determined by a secret ballot vote by the executive and directors of the COCO Plowing Match Committee.

Other events held in 1980 were: Horse Pulling, Tractor Pulling, Horseshoe Pitching, Tug of War, Peace "Hawg" Calling, Mens and Ladies Bale Stacking, Stooking, Bag Tying, Bay Throwing, Bundle Tying, Belt Setting, Post Driving, Arm Wrestling, Log Sawing, Tobacco Spit, Children's Program, Displays and Demonstrations (which includes a threshing demonstration), Antique Display and Museum.

On a strictly entertainment level we had a beer garden with live entertainment, a home-sewers fashion show, a commercial fashion show, a beef barbecue supper, a banquet and presentation of awards, and a wind-up dance.

In the exhibit hall we displayed a poster competition for students, creative writing events for all age groups, and 118 classes of household handicrafts and baking for various age groups to enter.

Following is a list of the 1980 Plowing Match Executive and Directors:

- Chairman - Jim Sather
- Vice Chairman - Arlene Barlund
- Past Chairman - Sharon Zamorsky
- Secretary - Tara Foote
- Treasurers - Elaine Dick and Adelaide Zmean
- Auditor - Val Heustis
- Plowing - Bill Lunn
- Queen of the Furrow - Bev Wells
- Horse Events - Lorraine Putio
- Tractor Pulling - Ted Sallis
- Grounds - Alan Laursen
- Booths - Vi Wilde
- Banquet - Terry Leriger
- Horseshoes - Bud Sather
- Special Events - Denny Sather
- Publicity - Shirley Wells
- Exhibits - Betty Grusie
- Displays and Demonstrations - Ruth Elhorn and Bill Bennett
- Transportation - Taras Putio
- Headquarters - Wendy Sather
- Antique Machinery Display - Stan Sather
- Entertainment - Wally Sinkevich
- Canvassing - Arlene Barlund
- Tickets - Allison Sather
- Childrens Program - Val Huestis
- AAAS Director - Morris Sinkwich
- CPC Director - Bill Lunn

This year, 1981, we will host our 11th annual Alberta Provincial Plowing Match. In 1984, we host the 30th annual Canadian Plowing Championships in conjunction with our 14th Provincial Match. Looking back and looking ahead, I guess we all have to be thankful that two adages were an important part of Ken Innes's life:

- "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." and
- "With God, all things are possible."

JULY 1979
Wanham

Homecoming

The annual Wanham Homecoming and COCO Days gets underway at the Wanham sports grounds this weekend with over 600 people expected to take part in the festivities.

Featured will be a Wheatbelt Baseball League tournament continuing all weekend with plans for an oldtimers game on Sunday.

Saturday will begin with a pancake breakfast 8-10 a.m., followed by the first game of the baseball tournament. A barbecue supper is scheduled for 5 p.m. and a street dance will follow if the weather permits.

An interdenominational church service will be held at 10 a.m. Sunday at the sports grounds followed by more baseball. The celebrations wrap up Sunday night with a wiener roast and sing-song.

There will be a display of pictures at COCO Hall all weekend including photographs from early pioneer days right up to the recent plowing championships in Wanham.

Events such as tractor pulls and horseshoeing are also scheduled throughout the weekend.

Registration begins at COCO Hall Friday night.



Birch Hills Senior Centre. Left to Right: Sam Parlee, Octave Prevost, Mac Watt, Sally Shmyr, Irene Hansen.



Birthday Party at Birch Hills Senior Centre. Around Table: Mollie Tansem, Walter Felsing, Albert Nybaaken, Annie Shaw, Dorian Wilde, Ira Taylor, Edwin Sather.



Cribbage Game at the Centre. Left to Right: John Lunn, Bob Blois, Jim Rutherford.



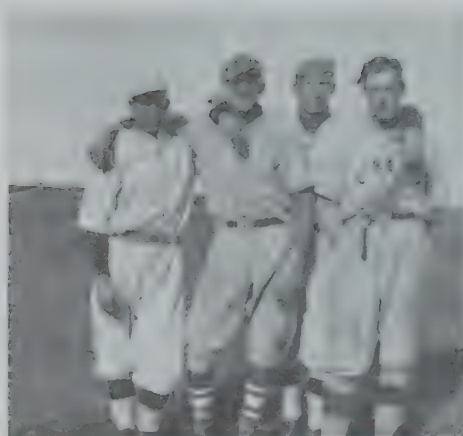
George MacDonald receiving an award for being the oldest visitor at the Homecoming.



Pool Table at the Centre. Left to Right: George Wendland, Bob Wade, Bill Lunn and Bill Sallis.



At The Centre. Left to Right: Ruth Elhorn, Mary Sather and Dorothy Connell.



Belloy Baseball Players - 1937. Left to Right: Emil Bolduc, Earl Stauffer, Joe Jasbec and Bill Wortman. Other people who played ball in Belloy at that time: Ross Archibald, Allan Archibald, Bill Ripley, Dave Bolduc, Henry Ferguson, Jack Culshaw, Malcolm Ferguson, Clarence Berland, John Sanford, Alvin and Willard Urness, Doug Wortman.



Belloy Baseball Team - Central Peace Champs - 1954. Back Row, Left to Right: Harold Dick, Steve Melnyk, Allan Scott, Marvin Phillips, Harold Lewis, Lloyd Bodette. Front Row: Edward Pierog, Tony Mazurkevich, Eric Hansen, Chuck Foote, John Kaspro and Archie Shannon.



Jack Culshaw and Nellie Scott at a Ball Game - Belloy.



Belloy Curling Rink - 1958. Madeline Ouellette in the kitchen. Children: Gary Wendland, Fred Lewis, Hilda Ouellette and Judy Nordvie.



Belloy Curling Rink - 1958. Left to Right: Ralph Bodette, Vivian Scott, Bill Ormiston, Jack Culshaw and Shirley Hansen.



Birch Hills Ski Club. Left to Right: Parking Lot, chalet and storage shed. The Ski Hill is located in the Birch Hills south and east of Belloy.



Belloy Curling Rink - 1958. Christina Sinkevich and Mrs. Rouleau.



East Peoria School - First Ladies Softball Team - 1943. Back Row, Left to Right: Anne Wendland, Bertha Bohnke, Amanda Kandt, Martha Sorenson and Freida Kandt. Front Row: Sandy Kozak, Violet Best, Irene Best, Lavina Dick and Marion Best.



Belloy Ladies Community Club. Back Row, Left to Right: Kitty Lewis, Winnie Moxley, Bernie Blois, Betty Nordvie, Annie Urness, Ethel Lewis, Vivian Scott and Ethel Keller. Front Row: Dot Botham, Jo Morrell, Esther Scott, Nellie Scott and Annie Kozeluk. Belloy Ladies Community Club was active for many years.



Jack Culshaw with daughter Faye and son Doug.

THE KAKUT STORY

by Sam Parlee

Nestled in the heart of the Peace lies Kakut Lake. Upon a bench of rolling hillside at the most southerly tip of the water's edge, lies the park. It is from this point of vantage that the eye of the proverbial beholder may be filled with beauty. On this lake the swans and the Canada geese in spring take a break of a fortnight, in their flight to the far North. In September they return, to spend a few short weeks before winging their way to more sunny climes.

It is upon this same lofty summit that one may stroll among the pines and maples, the larch and the spruce. One may boat, canoe or swim. One may use the ovens or out-door fireplaces. There are dressing rooms for bathers and water skiers. There are swings, slides, and sand boxes for youngsters.

Extensive clearing of the water-shed, beginning in the early thirties with forest fires, had quickened the runoff period. The outlet from the lake washed wider and deeper. In the mid-forties the lake was bone dry before mid-summer. Migratory waterfowl had virtually disappeared. The area was experiencing a severe drought. It was during the fifties that Ducks Unlimited, a sportsmen's organization with headquarters in Winnipeg, commenced to give some attention to the matter of building a spillway at the outlet, to thereby control the level of the water. Some of the local people felt that with a greater depth of water the lake could have a future as a recreational area.



Kakut Lake

KADOT LAKE RESORT ASSOCIATION FORMED

In the spring of 1962, a meeting was held in the home of Elmer and Lily Sather, at which time a slate of officers was elected to spearhead the project. The new organization was named Kadot Lake Resort Association and duly incorporated under the Societies Act. The Honorable Al Fimrite, M.L.A. for the Spirit River Area, worked untiringly with the local group throughout the early years when the spadework was in process.

In the fall of 1962, a meeting was arranged wherein Ducks Unlimited, the Department of Agriculture, the

Spirit River Fish and Game Association, and the Kadot Lake Resort Association would be in attendance. This meeting proved to be the turning point in the history of the lake and the proposed Park. But the decision was not reached easily.

When Corporal Pomeroy, R.C.M.P. officer, spokesman for the Fish and Game Association, was asked if he thought that the lake had any possibilities for recreation, he stated that in his opinion it had none whatsoever. When in turn the representative from the Department of Agriculture was asked what benefit the project might have toward agriculture, he declared that while it might have some benefit, it would take a magnifying glass to see it.

Here we were with two strikes against us, two deadly blows and no M.L.A. present. The engineer, who had expressed a desire to share the cost of a dike and spillway with Water Resources, was in the process of folding his books showing no willingness to go it alone. He took the position that even with the low level of water in the lake the ducks could survive.

The Kadot Lake Resort Association had taken easements from land-owners adjacent to the lake with a view to flooding; they had also purchased land on which the park was to be established. What could come out of this stalemate now?

Up to this point, not one person who lived in the area of the lake, spoke on the matter. Scanty knowledge and hasty judgement can set a worthy project on its haunches. Was this to be the order of the night?

The residents of the West Vale community knew the history of the lake, how its water level was higher in the early spring and summer, and very shallow in the fall. Flood control was the answer, if arrangements could be worked out.

The chairman of Kadot Lake Resort Association was able to furnish the meeting with the required information. He explained how fires had burned out the beaver dams on the east side of the lake, thereby greatly reducing not only the level but also the area of open water. No one questioned or disputed the testimony for a moment. Then it was pointed out that in 1945 and 1946 the lake dried up so that in moving his cattle across the lake bottom a cloud of dust hovered over the herd, as they made their way to the ranch where Harvey Albert lives at the present time.

He also pointed out that at that particular time in Manitoba they were experiencing a severe drought. Aluminum pipe was being laid from lakes to farm dugouts and it was feared the drought might well return to these parts. The lakes' benefit to agriculture was indisputable, and with the continuous falling of the water table every effort should be made to retain the runoff.

The results were most gratifying, for the maps came out again immediately and the professional people entered into the study and deliberations, along with the laymen with eager anticipation of what could be done.

The plans formulated that night, in the basement of the United Church in Rycroft, were put into effect in the following year. Mr. Overguard, who was designer of the 'Overguard spillway', moved in with his equipment.

Here at Kakut Lake he constructed an earth-fill some



Kadot Lake Resort Association. Back Row, Left to Right: Carl Nagel, Don Berner, George Olson. Front Row: Sam Parlee, Calvin Rottacker, Julius Scriba.

five feet in height, twenty feet wide at the base, with a ten foot finish on top. It was extended a quarter of a mile on the south-east shore of the lake forming a crescent either way from the outlet. Built into the outlet is the spillway. The construction is of pressure treated material. The piles have been driven with a pile driver, a double wall of heavy timber well ironed and braced like a bridge holds back a thousand acres of water. Stones had to be brought in from adjoining farms for reinforcing within and without. These men were assisted with stone and a right-of-way, on the farm of Everett Parlee, for moving equipment and hauling material.

NO LEGAL ACCESS

The proposed site for the park lay in the heart of a section of land. In other words, it was entirely surrounded by private property. An arrangement was worked out with the Department of Highways whereby they would pay for the right-of-way, which would have to be purchased from the adjacent land holders, and in that instance there were four separate parcels of land involved. The association, however, was to be responsible for engaging a surveyor - not only to survey the proposed route, but also the park itself.

Once again the question arose as to how to undertake a matter of this magnitude without first going back to the charter members and laying everything before them. The money collected so far had come chiefly out of their pockets. The same people would have to 'dig down' once more if they were to gain entry to the property. This they did, not knowing any better way to demonstrate their faith in this particular venture.

At this time the chairman of the association heard of a

survey party working in an area south of Grande Prairie. A trip by car to the skid shack of the head surveyor did the trick. He proved to be a most obliging and kindly man. His men were already on their way to work, though it was still before dawn on an early winter morning, when his visitor from the K.L.R. Association arrived. He had time for the maps laid out before him on the table, and though his schedule was full for some weeks, he offered to drive in that afternoon to make arrangements with Mr. Black at the Department of Highways office in Grande Prairie. That afternoon an arrangement was worked out to the mutual satisfaction of all three parties; namely, the Department, the surveyor and the Park chairman, whereby legal access would become a reality. The Department would buy the land from the farmers for the throughfare, they would build and gravel the road, the Resort Association would pay for the survey. The surveyor agreed to undertake the work before spring break-up, which he did.

IMPROVING THE SITE

In the spring of 1963, the Resort Association received its first grant of five hundred dollars. With the cooperation of the people of the community the first building was erected. It served as kitchen and concession booth as well as having special rooms where water skiers could change clothing. Some out-buildings were also put up.

When a second grant of five hundred dollars came in, steel swings with chains were constructed. A spiral slide was procured; a well was dug, and water was piped to the kitchen.

The main area of the park had, by then, a beautiful green turf with a belt of summer fallow for trees.

Trees for the park were ordered in the fall of 1962. The government maintains a nursery at Oliver, Alberta, where farmers may obtain trees free of charge for planting farm shelter belts. The park received all of the nursery stock free of charge. When the first trees arrived, it turned out to be an ideal time for planting as there was a break in the weather, due to a wet spell, and farmers turned out in sufficient numbers to put in all the trees in one day. In the years that followed men and women worked side by side to hoe and weed in the shelter belt. Additional trees were added as time went on. In all the tree planting in the park, losses were minimal.

CENTENNIAL YEAR 1967 PIER AND PICNIC SHELTER

The Centennial grant for four thousand dollars gave a new dimension to the park with the erection of a pier and a modern picnic shelter. The shelter was planned by a building committee and constructed by two local carpenters, Buck Parlee and Heinz Toerper. A great deal of credit should go to Carl Nagel for the time and effort that went into the construction of the dock.

Pressure treated piling was purchased with a view to having the Department of Highways come to our assistance once more. Here it might be pointed out that the people of the area have been highly favored with the help that did come from that direction. The executive, in conferring with Mr. Roger Black, received considerable advice on the type of material that would be most suitable for the construction of that facility. Then permission had to be granted from Edmonton for the use of the pile-driving equipment, before work could proceed on the dock. Time in this instance was a vital factor, as it was pointed out by the engineer and Mr. Black that their equipment had to be moved to commence work on the first of March, and that, with a full schedule for the season, our job (which would be gratis) would have to be first or not at all. The chairman contacted Al Fimrite, by phone in Edmonton, and he in turn took the matter up with the Honorable Gordon Taylor, Minister of Highways. The permission came through only in the nick of time. We had only one day to make use of the equipment. Two qualified men in the employ of the Department did come and operated throughout the day.

Holes in the ice had been cut by men of the community prior to the arrival of the pile driver. A number turned out the day the piles were driven, in order to assist the operators with the preparation of the material.

On the day appointed for laying the caps and deck, there were twenty-two men at work. By two-thirty the pier was completed.

Since that time, some fifty feet of this construction has been destroyed by drifting ice in spring. However, a buffer has been built of steel culverts set in vertically and loaded with fieldstone to prevent further damage.

In an endeavor to secure easements from land-owners, the association found it necessary to buy one quarter of land from a widow, as she refused to sign. It turned out to be a valuable asset to the promoters of this particular

enterprise as there was plenty of sand on this holding suitable for the beach.

One man came with a bulldozer and opened the pit, even though the ground had been frozen to a considerable depth. A number of trucks were brought into use by their owners. Loaders at the pit played a very important role in the sanding operation. The year 1967 was highlighted by the centennial celebration, July 1.

THE OFFICIAL OPENING

The official opening ceremony included a speech by The Honorable A.O. Fimrite. The ribbon cutting was done by Mrs. Elizabeth Parlee, who was in her 87th year and had been a pioneer in the vicinity. Music for the day was supplied by the Peoria Band. Boat rides were given by a number of the boat owners to children as well as the grown-ups. A program was also conducted wherein ladies were dressed in the style of one hundred years earlier. Some poetry of local origin was read, followed by supper and a wiener roast.

CONCLUSION

To many, these facilities are taken for granted. One visitor was heard to say, "It's a wonder they wouldn't try to fix the place up a bit". Most people do seem to appreciate the accommodations however, and do leave the place in good order.

FOOTNOTES

Kakut is the proper name for the lake, as found on the map. Kadot is a colloquial term adopted by the resort association.

The author was elected chairman of the association and continued in this office during the years that the park was being established.



Heart Valley Women's Association - formed Jan. 29 - 1936. Included are: Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Pearson, Mrs. Butterwick, Mrs. McLean, Miss Grigor, Mrs. Peebles, Mr. Wm. McLean, Red McLean, Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Meadus.

REGARDING THE HEART VALLEY F.W.U.A.

by Martha Scriba

While Julius was busy farming, Martha cast around for some outside interest and since more than one woman was of the opinion that we were stagnating, we started a community organization, the "Good Will Club". Bazaars, for which we worked like Trojans - sewing and knitting, crocheting and embroidering, baking and pickling, in order that we buy back our own products at a slightly higher price, twice a year - were the source of club money. We bought Christmas gifts for all the children in the Heart Valley District, sent one of our members annually to the always interesting Farm Women's Week in Fairview, held whist drives during the winter, picnics in summer and once a month a dance at Central Hall during winter. But these activities were more or less locally oriented and we were eager to look a little further. We attended or had speakers of other organizations, church groups, Red Cross, Women's Institute and Farm Women's Union, to see which group would provide ours with activities and challenges to meet our needs. Since our men were members of the men's side of the Farmer's Union, we decided to join this group on the women's side, which was farm oriented but offered wider interest.

Through the F.W.U.A. (now Women of Unifarm) our local is a member of the World Wide Association of Country Women of the World. Through this organization we sponsored a foster child in India, helped the International Unitarian Service Committee (Dr. Hitchmanova) with quilts which we sewed and baby layettes, and last, but by no means least, furthered our own farm women's interest. We took part in conferences and conventions, learning about health and welfare, consumer problems, education and the law concerning women of Alberta, learning and partaking in First Aid and Home Nursing courses, in short, widened our horizons considerably.

I was privileged to represent our local at the Grande Prairie and Edmonton conventions together with other delegates climbing the usual ladder from local president, representative on the provincial board of directors, to the "exalted" position of F.W.U.A. director for the South Peace River area. This involved presenting organizational aims and programs to sub-districts and locals and giving me the great pleasure to meet many women of similar interests and forging life-long friendships with some.

When we moved to Grande Prairie in 1968, I resigned as F.W.U.A. director, but was asked to act as secretary for the district, a position I held for three years; fruitful years, learning years and rewarding, in more intangible than tangible aspects.

WEST VALE HELPING HAND CLUB

submitted by Eileen Parlee

The West Vale "Helping Hand" Club held its organizational meeting at the home of Lily Sather, August 6, 1958. The ladies chose as the purpose of their

organization, to aid worthwhile charities. Lily Sather was voted in as the first president and Beulah Dorsey as the secretary-treasurer. Fay Sather and Shirley Sevre were placed in charge of crafts and fund raising enterprises.

Their first project was to send useful kitchen articles to the Grace Children's Home at Dimsdale (a home for needy children) whenever they could get a box filled. This club was well attended for many years by the district ladies.

Their projects grew from sending parcels to the Grace Children's Home, to:

1. Sending support to Phyllis McLean, a missionary.
2. Being affiliated with C.O.C.O. of Wanham.
3. Assisting the Kakut Lake resort project.
4. Making quilts to be ready for needy projects or causes, such as fire victims.
5. Supporting various charitable organizations as the needs arose.
6. Sending a lady or two to Fairview for Farm Women's Week.

7. Their baking always disappeared quickly at bake sales, teas and sale of hand made articles, held each spring in Wanham.

Many pleasant times were enjoyed as the ladies met from month to month in the district homes.

This group disbanded in March, 1976.



West Vale Drama Club. The cast of "Yimmy Yohnson's Yob". Left to Right: Ethel Burns, Alice Johnston, Mary Wilson, Ken Munro, Babel Funk, Sylvia Tracy, Albert Funk, Charlie Edey, Arthur Johnston (Yimmy Yohnson) and Paul Nagel.

Times That Were



Yoke of oxen hauling logs in the Saddle Hills - February,
1938 ~ no snow yet

TOWNSHIP 17 RANGE 3 WEST OF 6 TH MERIDIAN

Researched by Joyce Sinkwich NORTH Surveyed by J.B. St. Cyr

Horace Newton 1920	John Murray 1919	Delbert Wells 1920	Oscar Oakleaf 1919	T.J. Gray 1919	Duncan Cameron 1918	Peter Rousseau 1919	George Munro 1918	Michael Shannon 1919	Michael Shannon 1919	George McDonald 1919	A.D. St. Pierre 1921
31	Henry Fitch 1930	32	Aristide Ross Patvin Archibald 1934 1920	33	Robert Henderson 1922	34	Hans Morten-son 1919	35	Emil Molander 1919	36	Fred Athanase kind Prevost 1919 1919
	Mary Jaruback 1934				Duncan Don Cameron Munro 1928 1921		George Charles Munro Geller 1918 1919		E.H. Bode 1919		Chris Edward Bergsford Prevost 1919 1919
30	Lloyd Fowler 1949	29		28	Brown Elizabeth Arca Hauser 1931	27	1919 George Charles McLean Geller Munro 1918	26	George Sam Munro Gray 1919 1930	25	Gustave Otto Tharin Jenner 1927 1919
							John L. Harring 1931		Anastazy Pisarczyk 1934		Otto Joseph hipinski Hauser 1936 1928
19		20		21	Mrs Eva Lee 1933	22		23		24	
18		17		16		15		14		13	
7		8		9		10		11		12	
										Melvin Rottacker 1927	
Anten Dofper 1930						Otto Herman Nolde Schrieber 1928 1927	Hans Isaac Morten- Seibel son 1927 1927			Frank Wm. Downy Pranskat 1927 1930	
6		5		4		3		2		1	
Friedrich Gustave Behnke Behnke 1929 1929	Erik Seure 1928	M.O. Willing- rand 1930	Martin Anders Dofper Sterne 1930 192	Sverre Delmar Barseth Reiswig 1927 1928	Albert Dorse Moss Prosser 1928 1927					Charles Hugo Morris Moritz 1927 1927	

SOUTH

Researched by Joyce Sinkwich

NORTH Surveyed by J B St. Cyr.

31	32	33	34	35	36
30	29	28	27	26	25
19	20	21	22	23 Lion Metz 1934	24
18	17	16	Ernest Pepper 1931 Mary Laughy 1931 Reuben Metz 1933 Ellen Nelson 1934	15 Dorcas Marcel 1930	14 13
7 Richard Walter Johnson 1928 1929	8 Wesley Rutledge 1929	9 Robert Metz 1930	10 F Herrin 1929	11	12
Joseph Mayer 1917 6 Joseph Mayer 1920	William Caviness 1917 5 Arthur Campbell 1919	Laurent Leriger 1916 4 Arthur Campbell 1919	Peter Tansem 1917 3 Peter Anderson 1914	Fredrick Nielson 1928 2 Cliff Tansem 1917	George MarDonald 1930 1 Clifford Tansem 1921 Hjalmer Tansem 1923

SOUTH

FRIENDLY, PROGRESSIVE-MINDED WANHAM, spread over 12 acres a stone's throw from Highway 49 has come a long way since Pete Tansem opened the first post office back in 1917. noted the Herald-Tribune in its photo feature on that community carried March 4, 1954.

"The thriving Central Peace centre with its stores, entertainment centres and educational facilities, is the shopping centre for hundreds of families living in an area roughly nine miles wide and 22 miles long.

"Wanham's is a story of steady growth rather than a spectacular overnight mushrooming. E.D. Prevost, a Wanham businessman, remembers that back in 1916 when his family arrived in the district they purchased a railway ticket for Mile 332 on Grizzly Bear Prairie. Wanham didn't exist.

"He recalls that among the early farmers were Alfred Syr, William Trumpower, George Gilmour Sr., Jack Gray, Oscar Oakleaf, Jack Bramlett, Eli Barrett and the Bankhead and Leriger families.

"It was in the fall of 1917 that Mr. Tansem opened the post office and the first store. The new centre was named Wanham after a railway engineer.

"The first house on what is now the town site was built by the Leriger family in 1914. It still stands.

"Three distinct tides of settlement washed over the farmlands radiating out from Wanham. In 1920 and 1921 many homesteads were taken up in the district; another big group of settlers took up land in 1928 and 1929. North of Wanham the Lassiter project opened up 22,000 acres of land in the Wanham trading area following the last war. Wanham was headquarters for the crews engaged in the gigantic land-clearing project.

"It was in 1929 that Wanham's main street really began to take shape. In that year the hotel, the lumber warehouse and a couple of stores were built.

"As a hamlet in a local improvement district, Wanham has no elected representatives to guide its affairs. The Board of Trade has been largely responsible for sparking municipal development and improvement ... Telephone and electric power have long been available."

WANHAM, THEN AND NOW (1928-1978)

by Clara (Hauser) Johnson

At first, there was only land ... rich and lush, patches of prairie interspersed with vast tracts of bushland ... the Smoky River slowly meandering along its course, eventually to join the mighty Peace on its journey to the Arctic ... smaller rivers, here and there, and lakes dotting the landscape. Eons ago, great dinosaurs roamed over the territory now occupied by moose, deer, bears, wolves and coyotes. Arrow-heads and crude tools found in archeological digs, give evidence that the forbears of the present-day Indian people once lived here. Thousands of years were to pass before the white man ventured into the country -- a cairn at Dunvegan Crossing commemorates the journey of Sir Alexander McKenzie up the Peace, in 1793, on his way to the Pacific. Nearly a hundred more years were to go by before trappers, fur-traders and missionaries followed. And more years were to pass before permanent settlers came, and began to open up the land for farming.

The earliest settlers began moving into the country in about 1910; first, to the Grande Prairie-Beaverlodge area ... brave people struggling through the wilderness in wagons pulled by horses or oxen, fording rivers, wallowing through muskeg, fighting hordes of insects -- but on they came, venturing into the unknown ... what an

experience it must have been! Some of Wanham's earliest settlers, it has been said, walked in from Edmonton in 1913-14. The Northern Alberta Railway was built in 1915, and it was after that, the problem of transportation having been eased, that the greatest number of settlers came to our part of the country. (There was to be another "land rush" in the 1940's after the end of World War II,



E.D. and B.C. Railway - Grizzly Bear Prairie - 1917.



Wanham Station - 1928. Mildred Harrington in the doorway.

when returning veterans took up land on the Lassiter Project -- but this was far in the future).

"The scene having been set", to the best of the writer's ability, what follows can be called the rambling memories of a former Wanham resident -- that is, the memories of Clara Hauser Johnson -- covering a span of fifty years from 1928 to 1978. Make yourselves a cup of coffee ... and let's reminisce:

EARLY DAYS IN WANHAM

At the time the Hauser family arrived, in 1928, Wanham could not even have been classed as a "hamlet" -- it was merely a little cluster of two or three buildings, and a narrow, rutted trail straggling southward into the

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Shipper's No.

Agent's No.

RECEIVED, subject to the classifications and tariffs in effect on the date of the receipt by the Carrier of the goods described in the Original Bill of Lading.

at 19.....

from the goods described below, in apparent good order, except as noted (contents and condition of contents of packages unknown), marked, consigned and destined as indicated below, which said Company agrees to carry to its usual place of delivery at said destination, if on its road, otherwise to deliver to another carrier on the route to said destination. It is mutually agreed, as to each carrier of all or any of said goods over all or any portion of said route to destination, and as to each party at any time interested in all or any of said goods, that every service to be performed hereunder shall be subject to all the conditions, whether printed or written, herein contained (including conditions on back hereof) and which are agreed to by the shipper and accepted for himself and his assigns.

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bush. The first impression one received was that this was an unpopulated, lonely wilderness -- but in actual fact there were already many families scattered throughout the area; they were just not as visible then as now. There were people here from other provinces in Canada, from the United States, from Great Britain, from the Scandinavian countries, from Europe and the Ukraine. Some were fairly well established by this time, and able to welcome and assist newcomers like ourselves.

Wanham, at that time, consisted of a box-car for a railway station (one half mile from town); a small store-and-post office; and two to three small houses. The Leriger family, and the Peter Tansem family, were already living in Wanham -- and perhaps the Prevost family, although they also had a farm in the Belloy area. (My memory of those very early days is somewhat vague). In the next few years, however, Wanham grew to include some of the following places of business: Mr. Prevost, Sr., selling lumber ... Ralph Pickard, operating the first blacksmith shop (I can remember his brightly glowing forge where he tempered and sharpened plowshares) ... Joe Hauser built a shop for his oil and machine agency (topped off by "the Case eagle") ... Adolphus St. Pierre had a bakery ... the Harringtons came in 1929 and started a hardware-store (eventually expanding to take over the Frontier Lumberyard), and Ed later became the postmaster ... soon there was even a hotel, operated by Hermel Girard. With only two trains per week, and poor highways, Wanham was a little world unto itself -- and the outside world seemed far away.

PEOPLE -- IN WANHAM AND DISTRICT

There were a great many "old bachelors" in the community -- or they seemed old to me, in those days. Actually, they were neither old, nor were they all bachelors ... quite a few of them had wives and children elsewhere. Do you remember, from Wanham: Peter Anderson, Eli Barrett, Rob Webster, Carl Erstad, Oscar Oaklief, Hans Mortensen (one year at Halloween some pranksters painted blue stripes on Hans' white horse -- Hans was even more indignant than the horse!), Mike Shannon, Frank Pepper, Tim and Reuban Metz. I seem

to recall, as well, a young man called Hansen who was something of an artist ... he later went to the far north, married "an Indian princess", and eventually took her back to his homeland of Denmark. Farther afield, to the east, were Frank Carpenter, Nathan Bramlett, John Borland, Herman Thorin, Louis Tansem, W.J. Sterling. Southward, in the Peoria-Heart Valley, were John Boeske, Joe Richter, Otto Nolde, Hans Schmidt and W.P. MacDougall. The younger single men of the community (those who still lived on the farm with their parents, and so could not be classed as "genuine Bachelors") usually married at a suitable age -- snapping up one of the school-teachers, or a local girl -- and founded families of their own.

Then there were the "founding families". The French were represented by the Lerigers and the Prevosts, who came to Wanham in about 1916-17. Of Scottish and English descent were the George MacDonalds, the Duncan Camerons, the Roy Camerons, the Jack Murrays, and the Harringtons. The Scandinavian countries gave us the Tansems, the Ramsfields, the Christensens, the Jacobsens, the Cornelius Olsons, the Martin Bodes, and Herman and Gus Thorin ... and to the west, the Richard Johnsons and the Wrolsons. Of German or Austrian descent, were the Hausers, the Wiegels, and the Nelitz family. (Perhaps one could also include Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Nolde, but they later



The Harrington Hardware Store and Post Office.

returned to Germany). The Manzulenkos, Sanoskis, Dubys and Lipinskis were of Ukrainian or Polish descent. The Murphys were Irish ... so, perhaps, were the Wellses ... and under "American and miscellaneous" (because I don't know), I would put Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Trumpower, the Laughy and Metz families, Ralph Pickard and his wonderful mother Mrs. Carrie Pickard, and the Fowlers. There were other families yet to come -- but I am writing of the pre-World War II days.

"Out South" (in West Vale, Heart Valley and Peoria) were the Funks, Parlees, Bohnkes, Weghs, Sathers, Myrlands, the Marius Olsons ... the Bozarth's, McLeans, Mitchells, Scribas, Rosinskys, Peebles, Norens, Munros, Edeys, Beamers, Meadus, Morris'es, Murrays, Gulicks ... and in Peoria, a community of Seventh Day Adventists there were the Reiswigs, Zipricks, Rottackers, Toftners, Treibwassers, Davises, Bests and Bennetts.

Some of the early Belloy families that I can remember were: Haas, Jazbeck, Ferguson, Gilmour, Francis, Fortier, Bolduc, Babb, Bankhead, Archibald, Roulleau -- and a bit later, Scott, Phillips, Heck, Urness.



Heading south of Wanham - near the old Hauser place.

AROUND TOWN

Years ago, Wanham was the same "sleepy little Town" that it is now -- and yet, somehow, there seemed to be more going on. I think we had two restaurants (a Chinese restaurant, and one run by the Jacobsens) ... there was a pool hall (anyone remember Mr. Sheedy?) ... two stores (Blonskis' and Sandercocks' Dept. Store) ... hardware and building supplies ... three or four machine and oil agencies ... blacksmith shop, and later a service station ... a butcher shop ... and of course the hotel, a favorite stopping place. A half-mile north, the main reason for Wanham's existence: the grain elevators. (The only grain-buyers I can remember are Bernie Gant, and Stewart Bennett -- but there were many of them). By this time, also, we had a railway-station, with a residence nearby for the station agent; two that I can remember were Ernie Trump, and Noel Boisvert.

Then, as now, the focal point for community events was the Wanham Community Hall. At first there was the old log building, located where one now finds the Maple Leaf Bulk Oil Station; later, the hall was moved or rebuilt, downtown. There we held movies, dances, concerts, whist drives, teas, and bazaars, wedding

receptions, political meetings, and even church services. On two occasions, travelling clinics (a team of doctors and nurses from Edmonton) used the hall as a "hospital" where they separated hundreds of children from their tonsils ... this would be in about 1929, and 1939.

Even in its prime there were probably never more than 350 people living in Wanham -- but what they lacked in quantity, they made up in quality. They were "the best" ... community-minded, concerned people. If disaster or tragedy struck, they immediately came forward to help. Joys and sorrows were shared by everyone. And if, as some complained, "in a small town everyone knows everyone else's business" -- so what? I always thought it rather nice that people were interested in the welfare of their fellow-citizens!

TRANSPORTATION

The only link with the "outside world" (Edmonton), in the early days, was the railway -- one did not travel on the narrow, unpaved dirt roads any more than absolutely necessary. Meeting the train was a big event: one went down to the station once or twice a week, just to see who was passing through -- it was "something to do". For years, after I left home to work in Edmonton, my only mode of travel back and forth was by train ... and I even enjoyed that long, tiring trip -- there were always so many interesting fellow-travellers. It is only in the past 20 years that I have taken to travelling by car, or (under protest) by plane. I still miss the train ... although something was lost when steam gave way to diesel, so that even that "lonesome whistle" sounds different now. We did not do any more long-distance travelling than absolutely necessary, when I was young -- even a trip to Grande Prairie was a big event which necessitated a great deal of planning and forethought; if it rained, you were in trouble, especially if you still had to get through the Saddle Mountains. Nowadays, the trip from Wanham to



The fire at Sandercock's Store.



*Alex Sandercock's
Hardware Store.*

Grande Prairie seems only a matter of minutes -- and driving to Edmonton is a casual jaunt of a few hours. "The old horse-and-buggy days " are a dim memory now ...

WEATHER AND "OTHER DISASTERS"

Why our geography books ever said we lived in the "the temperate zone," I have never been able to understand! Spring, summer and fall were usually very pleasant ... but the winters, with few exceptions, were dreadful. Cold??? One winter the temperature dropped to -74°F. Cold spells would last for five-to-six weeks (they still do, for that matter) ... but at least there was the occasional chinook to "break up the winter". One year there was snow every month except July -- I particularly remember that in 1948 or 1949, when everyone was expecting a "bumper crop", there was a heavy snowfall on August 9th ... the end of all those high hopes. (But there was always "next year"!)

We children all had to walk to school -- a daily walk of anywhere from one-half to three and a half miles, one way. In the very cold weather, if more than -45°F, our mothers usually kept us at home ... but usually we were clad in innumerable layers of clothing, socks and moccasins, toques and yards of woolen scarves -- and we survived everything King Winter threw at us. A few children were fortunate enough to travel, in the worst weather, by team-and-sled (with a small heated "caboose" on the sled) ... how I envied them!

Spring brought a different problem: certain low spots on the road would flood -- and then we children would have to wait for a team and wagon to come along and take us through the swiftly-flowing water.

Weather was always the main concern of farmers: would the fields dry up in time to get the crop in?? Would there be a late spring frost, once the crop was up, killing the tender new shoots ... and then, in the fall, would there be hail -- or snow -- to dash their hopes? Generally speaking, all went well ... and if it didn't, there was always another year!

The danger of a hailstorm was not particularly great, although it seemed to increase as the years went by and more land was cleared ... Once, a tornado swept across the country to the north of the Rycroft-Wanham-Belloy-Codesa area -- flattening buildings, toppling box-cars at railway sidings, and even causing one or two deaths. Most frightening of all were the forest fires ... several times our farm-house (at the edge of the bush, south of town) was threatened -- in fact, the back of the house was scorched -- and Wanham itself came close to being wiped out on occasion. Remember the "big fire" of 1948, when the entire Birch hills were aflame? What a terrifying sight! Firefighting headquarters were set up on Del Wells' farm, and men and machines made a gallant attempt to control, if not stop, the fire ... but it swept as far as the Smoky River before it came to a halt. The smoke from the fire was so dense, and travelled so far, that it necessitated closure of airports in Edmonton.

Mosquitoes, blackflies and horseflies were another unpleasant fact of life. However, they were something one became accustomed to. "Smudges" always had to be provided for the cattle and horses, who crowded close to the smoke for relief. Frequently, smudges were also kept going at the back door of the house, or even inside -- or there would have been little sleep at night. In later years, insects seemed to become less of a problem ... perhaps because there was more open, cultivated land.



Joe Hauser's Shop.

GOLDEN SHEAVES

The best time of year, then and now, was "harvest time". In the early days, of course, crops were cut and "stooked" -- and what a beautiful sight to see huge fields covered with neat stooks of grain, row on row! It was not only a beautiful *sight*, but the smell of the ripened grain was intoxicating! Then came the threshing-crews, going from farm to farm ... a day here, two days there ... with the farmers' wives vying with one another to see who could provide the best meals for the men. I loved to help - and eat! Threshing-machines are now part of ancient history -- but I have noticed, at the Wanham Plowing Match, when the old steam-powered thresher starts up, everyone is drawn to the scene as if by a magnet.

In the 1930's, there were little one-room schools dotted all over the country: the Wanham (South Slope) School a mile south of town; the Steele School to the east and later another small school right in the town of Belloy; schools in Heart Valley, Peoria and West Vale, and even one on the banks of the Burnt River, west of Wanham. Quite often a tiny teacherage was built beside the school, and here the teacher lived -- this was convenient, since the teachers frequently acted as janitors (part of their unwritten job description). There were no unions then! Some of the Wanham teachers that I remember, were Mrs. Laura Lampert, Mr. William McTavish, William Guttierrez, Miss Margaret Ramsay, Stewart Jones, Miss Laura Settle, Maggie Ungstad, Grace Wishart, Ozan Prevost, Norma MacDonald, Alice and Adelaide O'Dwyer. (When I returned to live in Wanham in 1947-1952, one of the things I enjoyed most was assisting some of these later teachers with their Christmas concerts).

WANHAM DISTRICT NURSES

One of the first nurses in Wanham, if not the first, was Kate Brighty -- I have a copy of her book, "While Rivers Flow", sub-titled "An Account of Pioneer Nursing Adventures in Alberta". Most interesting. The first nurse I can remember, though, was Mrs. Katherine Cole. She was a tall, handsome, woman who rode on horseback to see her patients. A district nurse, in those days, had to be prepared to handle almost every kind of emergency ... the nearest hospital was at Grande Prairie, and it took many hours to get there. (I had acute appendicitis when I was eleven years old, and had to wait three days for a train to get me to Grande Prairie and the hospital. Babies were born at home in those long-ago days ... and our nurses must have been excellent midwives as well, because I can't recall any "casualties").

Another nurse was a red-haired, irascible woman -- Dr. O'Brien; she terrified me. And for many years we had as our district nurse, Dr. Emma M. Johnstone, a beautiful woman who loved nature as much as loved caring for people ... Dr. Johnstone died in Edmonton, a few years ago, at the age of 94.

As we neared the 1940's, and after, along came Helen Faulks (who married Ed Harrington); Marion Wainion

(who married Paul Leriger); Audrey Fysh (who married Lawrence Laughy). District nurses now seem to be part of the past ... but in "olden days" they were a vital and necessary part of the community.

THE EARLY CHURCH IN WANHAM

Our first resident minister was Charlie Kitney, of the United Church. Charlie used to make his rounds from one small church (or school, where services were sometimes held) via horseback. As he rode past our place on his way to a service at Heart Valley (combined, I believe, with a visit to a certain schoolteacher out there), we used to hear him singing happily at the top of his voice ... and a good voice it was !!

Then the Presbyterian Church came to Wanham: first, Miss Grigor and Mrs. Ledingham, who were deaconesses -- they made their rounds by horse and buggy (the spring of which sagged considerably on Mrs. Ledingham's side, as she was built of generous proportions). Some of our Presbyterian ministers were Mr. Hutchison, Fred Miller, Dick Moore, Don Campbell and Ken Innes. The only Catholic priests I can remember are Fr. Richer, and Fr. Harry Thomas. I used to play the organ regularly in the Presbyterian Church (again, this is in the years 1947-1952 when I returned to Wanham), and at special services at the Catholic Church -- consequently, I liked to refer to myself as a "Presbyterian - Catholic".

ENTERTAINMENT

("HAVING A DURN' GOOD TIME")

On the whole, we made our own entertainment. Each small town or community had their "Sports Day" in summer, and there was always heated rivalry between baseball teams -- especially between Wanham and Belloy! In winter, of course, it was hockey. There was also curling. Joe Hauser first brought curling to the attention of the local men -- he was probably the only one who had ever curled, at that time, but once the others had tried it, they were converted for life! The first curling rink, built on the eastern outskirts of town, collapsed in a particularly strong wind; next came the well-constructed building which now exists -- first with natural ice (every year, the annual bonspiel was played on ice covered with a film of water) ... and now, we have the well-equipped, comfortable, rink with artificial ice ... nothing but the best! It almost makes me feel like curling again!

People would present plays -- local talent, making their own costumes and scenery, when necessary, ... and then go from one community hall to another with the play. Heart Valley and Belloy seemed to have an unusually good supply of acting talent; Wanham, however, was not far behind. Peoria, then as now, was noted for its good singers: George Reiswig had a group who went around giving musical concerts (one song I will always remember was "Sleep, Kentucky Babe" done beautifully by a male quartet). Sometimes a concert took the form of a variety-show: Louis Hoeght and Ed Prevost would compose hilarious ditties about local businessmen and sing them; Ed Harrington might sing a solo (his sister Onagh was also much in demand as a soloist); there might be a duet



Work being done on Pete Tansem's store - later the Chinese cafe.



Margaret, Gordon, Ethel and Norma MacDonald and Clara Hauser - 1930.

by Gladys and Vera Tansem; someone might do a dance. Mrs. Roy Cameron was usually the accompanist. On one occasion, Olive MacDonald and Bob Sawers dressed in appropriate Scottish costume and sang "Come Under my Plaidie". Hazel Trump frequently sang in concerts -- and in church. Bob Sawers had an act called "The Miser", which was so realistic that it was frightening.

Our first movies were old silent films: "Ben Hur", "The Covered Wagon", and "Uncle Tom's Cabin". I was utterly thrilled by them. In later years, of course, we graduated to talkies, and people came from the outlying communities to see them -- not only the "good old westerns", but also such movies as "How Green Was My Valley", "Rose Marie" and "Maytime". (I used to see Nelson Eddy's movies over and over; he was my first love -- and I went into deep mourning when he married someone else instead of waiting for me!)

Politics were another form of entertainment, taken very seriously -- and just about everyone attended meetings, whether they were Liberal, Social Credit, or N.D.P. (Where were the Conservatives, then?) Everyone's political views were well-known, there was always a great deal of friendly heckling which provided much amusement.

For many years, Wanham was famous for "Klondike Nites" (We had "Klondike Nites" long before Edmonton ever dreamed of their "Klondike Days"). These were held two nights in succession, usually on a Friday and Saturday -- and took the form of a casino-and-dance, emulating the days of the "Gold Rush". There was bingo, wheels-of-fortune and other games; jitney-dancing; coffee and sandwiches. (Drinks were never served in the hall in those days -- the alcoholic variety, that is). "Funny money" was sold at a bank (5 cents was \$500, 10 cents was \$1000, and 25 cents was \$2500) and everything was bought and sold at these vastly inflated prices -- \$1000 for a cup of coffee, \$2500 for a sandwich, bingo at \$5000 a card. There was a jail into which the "sherriff" would throw various unsavory characters for some trumped-up misdemeanour, and they or their friends would then have to pay a huge fine for release or bail. People dressed in appropriate costumes -- or what they imagined was appropriate -- and everyone had the time of their lives.

And then there was "home entertainment". The art of conversation had not yet died (killed by television) -- and people visited back and forth, played cards, had sing-songs. (The Hausers and Wiegels loved to meet at one house or the other to sing -- there was an old reed organ at the Wiegels, and a piano at Hausers, and enough singers to make up a choir of sopranos, altos, baritones, and tenors.) Joe Hauser couldn't sing, but he helped accompany the singing by enthusiastically tapping his foot. What wonderful times we had! And after we had sung ourselves hoarse, there was food ... large quantities of it, with no one worrying about calories!

It was also the hey-day of radio and there were certain programs one never missed: "Amos and Andy", "The Lux Radio Theatre", "The Jack Benny Hour", "Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy" ... and oh yes, in the day-time programming, "The Happy Gang".



The Lumberyard, Post Office and Harrington's Hardware Store.

NOT ALL FUN AND GAMES

There were accidents and tragedies, too. I remember the untimely death of Mr. Pervost, Sr. ... the death by drowning of a young man called Fred Nielsen (and years later, under similar circumstances, David Gulick) ... a threshing accident which claimed the life of Mr. Wrolson, when his arm was torn off after being caught in the machinery ... the young Wellman boy dying of diptheria ... bachelors Frank Carpenter and Herman Thorin, in two separate cases and many years apart, found dead in their homes (Frank with his rifle beside him, three bullets discharged as a distress signal) ... Rene Audet of Eaglesham, who died in the flaming crash of the oil delivery truck he was driving ... Gordon MacDonald, in 1953, killed along with a doctor and a polio patient, as he was attempting to fly them from Grande Prairie to Edmonton ... Sam Kenney, Carlo Jacobsen, "Corky" Wiegel ... Stew Bennett's tragic death in a hunting accident ... a long list.

There were fires too ... the Roy Cameron house was totally destroyed by fire one winter ... as was Alex Sandercock's store, and much later, Ken Waters' machine shop, garage and residence.

On the slightly comic side (but it really wasn't all that funny) was the "Mumps Epidemic of 1952". I absolutely am certain of this date, for a change, because I was 30

years old ... and along with about 250 other adults in the Wanham-Belloy area, I had the mumps. How painful and humiliating! But I was not alone: everyone from 30 to 66 years of age, who had not contracted mumps in childhood, now suffered the same experience. We even "made the newspapers" (The Edmonton Journal) -- but this was small consolation.

LAW AND ORDER

This never seemed to be a problem; generally speaking, we were law-abiding citizens, and did not commit any major (and very few minor) crimes. The nearest detachment of the R.C.M.P. was at Spirit River but the presence of the law was not often required in Wanham. Names I recall: Ned Rivers (I later worked with him at "K" Division in Edmonton), Jack Sangster, and Tommy Crawshaw.

GROWING UP IN WANHAM IN "THE DEPRESSION YEARS"

My contemporaries and I grew up in the Thirties -- during which time we went from six to 18 or 19 years of age. But I do not think any of us ever felt particularly deprived (or perhaps we failed to realize we were supposed to feel that way). Most of us were adequately fed and clothed, thanks to the tremendous efforts and sacrifices of our parents -- and although there must have been problems, and there was very little money, this was something we did not think of at the time. (Years later, when going through some old papers after my father's death, my brother and I found a commission-cheque stub dated in the late 1930's -- it was for \$9.00. On this princely sum, and probably never more than \$10.00 or \$11.00 a month, my father managed to support a family of four. Had we not lived on the farm, with vegetables and meat and dairy products available, things might have been different.

Others were not so well off: I can remember seeing "hoboes" passing through on the railway ... young men "riding the rails" looking for work on farms. Young as I was, I felt very sorry for them. Some families were forced to go on welfare ("relief", as it was called then) -- they received the generous amount of \$10.00 a month, whatever the size of the family. In return for this, the head of the family had to work on a road crew. (Times have changed!) Farmers were hard hit during the Depression; the price of grain was so low as to be almost out of sight ... and as for cattle! ... some of them shipped a steer or two to market and got nothing but a bill for the freight.

But to get back to growing up ... it was something that crept up on us, and in our small-town environment there seemed to have been none of the problems and temptations that go with growing up nowadays. Whether we lived on farms or in town, there were chores for us to do: speaking for myself, my duties were to keep the woodbox full, replenish the water barrel (with water in summer, snow in winter), and help weed the garden. Of course it goes without saying that girls also helped with the housework, which actually was *work* in those rather



Fimrite's Department Store.

primitive days ... and boys helped with the farm work. Aside from that, we went to school and learned what there was to learn ... and as we reached our teens, there were parties -- houseparties, or skating and sleighing parties. Parties then were vastly different from parties today, but we enjoyed them tremendously. (Who remembers my 16 birthday party, to which Julien St. Pierre brought a special present for all of us ... the measles?!)

Eventually, having completed our education, we went forth to our careers, the girls as teachers, nurses, secretaries -- the boys (it was now war-time) into the armed forces.

THE WAR YEARS (AND AFTER)

September, 1939, marked the beginning of World War II -- and it was to be six long, weary and heart-rending years before it ended. Not that it was all grim ... we adapted to conditions, and carried on. It has been said that "Canadians came of age", during that time -- our enlistment record, and our industrial achievement, was extraordinary. Young men from the Peace River country were among the first to enlist -- and those from Wanham were right in the forefront. Off they went ... into the Army the Navy, and the Air Force. And when it was over, at last, most of them returned to their homes and took up where they left off.

Meanwhile, the Alaska Highway was built in 1942-1943. (The reasoning was that a highway to Alaska was needed in the event of invasion by the Japanese). At any rate, everyone knows the story ... the extraordinary speed with which this tremendous project was completed and the impact it had on the economy and growth of the Peace River country and the Yukon. It was a most exciting time!

Not long after the end of the war, Wanham experienced another brief period of "boom" and prosperity -- partly due to the Lassiter Project and partly because of considerable oil exploration going on throughout the area. (By this time, my brother Ben and I had inherited the Imperial Oil bulk agency from my



The interior of Gaspard's Cafe.

father ... and were to carry on this business for six years). Wanham was a busy little place -- and I, for one, enjoyed those years very much.

WANHAM STILL LIVES ON

I feel that something should be cleared up, at this point: although I have been "remembering the years in Wanham between 1928-1978" (fifty of them!) ... I did not actually *live* in Wanham that long. I left in 1940, to become a secretary in Edmonton for seven years; returned for the six years between 1947-1953; back to Edmonton and elsewhere, to work; finally married in 1955 and took up residence elsewhere. But Wanham has always been "home", no matter where I wander ... and while my mother lived there, I returned every year on vacation, and even now, scarcely a year has passed without a visit, however short or long, to my beloved little hometown. Who knows? It may be that I will spend my retirement years in Wanham -- and if so, I am sure those years will be just as enjoyable as those of earlier days.

Some people (strangers passing through) may look upon Wanham as a sleepy little place -- with nothing to do. Some of us know better, don't we? The organization of C.O.C.O., some years ago, gave Wanham a new lease on life ... there is a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie in Wanham, that is the envy of many larger communities. Wanham now hosts the Annual Alberta Provincial Plowing Match, which is always a huge success. In 1978 the Dominion Plowing Match was held in Wanham, attended (unbelievable though it may seem) by 14,000 people.

Also in 1978 (July 1-2-3), I was present at what was, for me, the culmination of years of dreaming -- "The Wanham Homecoming". It was something I always wanted for Wanham ... and what a wonderful time we all had, 14,000 of us who came home for a reunion with old friends, and to see the old hometown again. The planning that went into the event, the warm hospitality ... the heart-warming reunions, sometimes with friends one had not seen for 20 to 30 years .. the fun and laughter and tears ... only those who were there can understand the wonderful feeling of "being home again". It was a once-in-a-lifetime thing ... and everyone seemed to be in agreement that it was "the best time of their lives". I will never forget it -- and it is on this happy note that I will end my reminiscences.

Board of Trade Heads



... E. H. Prevost, E. J. Harrington, Neel Boisvert

TIPS FOR YOUR CAR FROM 1917

First we give advice to the beginner on starting and cranking the car: Grasp the starting handle with the thumb on the same side of the handle as the palm. Never bear down on the crank. You may do it safely many times, but you incur the risk of a kickback so don't do it. Cranking is not an art but simply a knack. Get the flywheel to rocking to and fro until, with a last powerful acceleration, the piston is carried over its compression by the momentum of the flywheel as well as by the pull of your arm.

Once the car is running, select a straight road as wide as possible and with the engine running slowly, throw in the low speed. The car will move forward slowly and it will then be necessary to steer. At this stage it is necessary to learn self-control first and not to get rattled. If the car begins to run off the road, or into an obstruction, throw out the clutch and apply the foot brake so that it comes to a standstill. When the excitement has died down, try again and it will not be too long until steering comes easily.

"Don't for Drivers" Don't look around when your hat blows off. Don't drive a car until you are old enough to have good ordinary "horse" sense. Don't try to kiss the lady in the seat beside you. Don't trust one hand to do the guiding. Don't try to make up lost time by speeding down hill. Don't run at night without lamps. Remember, safety first, last and all the time.



Before Wanham had Good Roads.

TAX NOTICE

VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Name Fortier Edward

Address Grizzly Bear

Stale SCHOOL DISTRICT, No. 3787

P. O. Grizzly Bear
Dept. 1 1924

TAKE NOTICE that you have been assessed by the.....
for the property shown below for the year 1924..... All taxes must be paid within thirty days after date of this demand. Failing which the amount due
may be levied with costs by distraint of the goods and chattels of the person entitled to pay the same.

This notice must be produced when making payment.

W. B. Bath
Secretary-Treasurer.

No. of Assessment	DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY										Valuation of Improvements Income or Personal Property	Total Value of Assessment	Rate	Current Year	Arrears	Total Taxes Due
	Lot	Block	Sub.	Number of Acres	Part Sec.	Sec.	Tp.	Rge.	Mer.	Mills on \$						
12				100.46	33	77		26	10		1000.00		12 56 14 31		26 87	

Belloy Once Called Grizzly Bear Prairie

Known by the frontier-flavored name of "Grizzly Bear Prairie," Belloy in the early days was one of the focal points for activity in the then trackless wilderness of the central "Peace."

Legend has it that a huge grizzly was shot on the site of the present-day railway water tower, and from this the town derived its title. Another story known to a few oldtimers in the vicinity tells how a pioneer of the area admired a famous Flemish singer, Belloy, and passed on the name to the present town.

In 1931 the town had a comparatively small business area, boasting only a store, an elevator and a post office. Growth of the area was hampered by the dense bushland which surrounded the townsite.

In 1940 a huge bush fire roared through the region south of the railway tracks before it finally quenched its hissing flames in the Smoky River.

A year later a similar widespread blaze cleared a destructive swath through the forest north of the "tracks."

Although it cleared off the bush which curtailed agricultural progress until then it was a mixed blessing since many of the farmers who had cleared small acreages in the bush lost all of their belongings and were fortunate to escape with their lives.

The greatest flood of settlers poured over the land to the north of Belloy following the war when the Lassiter development made land available to the newly-returned soldiers.

Even though much of the early excitement of the influx of settlement has passed, the town is enjoying a steady growth.

A newly-erected curling rink is one example of the community spirit prevailing in the town. The curling club comprises an important portion of the community's social life.

LOOKING BACK - BELLOY

by Elaine Dick

Grande Prairie Northern Tribune - November 21, 1935:

"Our local school teacher, Mr. Joe Jasbec returned from Grande Prairie Saturday, November 9, with his bride, the former Miss Sara Gossen of the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital staff."

October 22, 1936:

"Mr. Everett Ferguson arrived last Tuesday to spend the winter with his father, Mr. William Ferguson of Belloy."

December 3, 1936:

"Don't forget the novelty dance being put on by the Belloy Badminton Club on Saturday, December 5."

March 4, 1937:

"Mr. George Gilmour was a visitor to Grande Prairie last week. While there, he went to see his first "talkie" movie which he enjoyed thoroughly."

March 25, 1937:

"A large crowd attended a hockey game at George McDonald's dam between Belloy and Wanham Sunday afternoon. Belloy defeated Wanham 4 - 2 in a nice clean game.

Playing for Wanham - Bernard Gant, Ed Prevost, Ernie Trump, A. Leriger, Will Laughy, Hill Brothers. Belloy - Ross Archibald, Allan Archibald, Joe Jasbec, Stauffer Brothers, Garnet Ferguson, W. Wortman."

September 14, 1939:

"Due to good threshing weather the last week, much of that work has been done. The best yield heard of so far was on the farm of Mrs. D.W. Bolduc where 23 acres of Marquis wheat yielded 47 1/2 bushels per acre. Others



Mike Kelly's Shack north of Belloy - 1932-33.

report yields of from 28 to 43 bushels per acre.

Miss Annie Kostash has taken a position with Mrs. J.H. Scott for the busy season."

GRANDE PRAIRIE HERALD - JANUARY 25, 1929

Mr. George Reiswig had a very bad accident at their sawmill while trying to put on a carrier belt. His arm got caught and was badly bruised and broken. Mr. Reiswig was taken to the Grande Prairie Hospital on Thursday. At this writing, we understand he is getting along very nicely.

The bachelors and some of the married men of Wanham and vicinity have some very good dogs. Ye scribe was told of one dog which trailed his master, who had driven by car to Grande Prairie. On the owners return, the dog met him one mile north of Sexsmith and refused to let the car go by until picked up. It would not have been so noticeable if it had been daylight, but - talk about dark - it sure was dark. How did the dog know the car?

APRIL 9, 1929

Mr. A.D. St Pierre is building an addition to his bakery and lunch counter.

Mr. J. Hauser is started on his new garage and implement shed.

Mr. L. Tansem, having sold his house, has started on a new one for himself.

The Birch Hills Cooperative Association opened for business on April 1.

MAY 2, 1929

Little Miss Lily Olson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. Olson, was rushed to the Grande Prairie Hospital on Saturday and was operated on at once. She was taken sick on Friday night and the district nurse, Mrs. Cole, was called. The little patient was given the best of care until morning, when she was taken into Wanham and there placed in an automobile and taken to the hospital. Due credit is given to Mr. Lemoine for being able to make the trip over the roads at this time of the year in such a short time.

Mr. Peter Nilson has sold his farm and he is moving into Wanham, where he will build a new residence.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Tansem entertained their friends last Saturday night. Norwegian Whist was played until 11 o'clock, when a lunch was served. After lunch games were played, among them the music game. The scribe has always had a hunch that Wanham has some excellent material in the musical line, but it was not given serious consideration until now. Everybody had a good time, and if the bag piper does not run out of tunes, we hope to have another whist game in the near future.

Work has started on the Wanham tennis courts and they will be ready for play in about one week.

Regular meeting of the Board of Trade was held Monday evening in the hotel.

There was a good turnout to the Tennis Club's whist drive and the following were the prize winners: Mrs. Murphy and Ed Harrington, ladies and gents first; Miss M. Murphy and Eric Ziprick, ladies and gents consolation, respectively.

WE SAW

Ed Fortier trying to operate a Fresno.

Two carloads of town men out on Sunday morning fixing the road between here and Roycroft.

Mr. E.D. Prevost hitching a wagon to a breaking plow.

Mr. Herman Schreiber losing a barrel of gas on the hill.

Peter Tansem sitting on a grocery box taking invoice.

A. St Pierre coming down the street with a saddle on his back.

MAY 10, 1929

Wanham Board of Trade held its first luncheon in the hotel Saturday evening, when a very dainty lunch was served by the ladies. After lunch the members enjoyed themselves at cards, etc. until midnight.

Seeding is finished in the district and the roads are in pretty good shape now for motor traffic.

Now that seeding is over Reiswig's mill will start sawing and will have about a half million feet to cut before closing down for the year.

Mass was held in the schoolhouse here on Sunday, Rev. Fr. Giroux of Spirit River officiating.

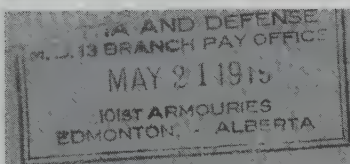
WE SAW

The section men whitewashing the stockyards and themselves.

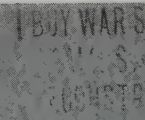
Andy Brooks in town with a new Durant.

MAY 24, 1929

At a meeting held in the Community Hall Saturday night it was decided to hold the annual sports on July 1, and committees were appointed to look after advertising and all arrangements in order to have the sports bigger and better than ever. Work is to start on Thursday to get a sportsground ready, several of the farmers donating teams and time to get the baseball diamond into first-class shape.



O. H. M. S.



#3205033,

Pte. F.F. Mitchell,

GRIZZLY BEAR,

ALTA.

FACE NO. 176
PIX NO. 881
ORDER 881

M. F. B. 234.
2 MILLIONS-11-19



Postmark on back of above letter.

JULY 1st, 1918: TIMES THAT WERE

A yesterday of 51 years ago saw Wanham's first July 1 celebration. It is talked about as a celebration but in reality it was a work bee and picnic.

The day was used to clear the site of the South Slope School, the first school in the district. Few names of this first small group of Wanhamites are recognizable today. Few of these pioneers of ours survive the passing of years. An old picture taken at this gathering shows about fifteen men, six women and four children taking part. Some of the men were dressed in bib overalls, others in white shirts and some with the big suspenders. The women looking prim and proper in their neat white blouses and wide brim hats must have just brought the lunch. The children also wore the wide brim hats. Three or four large brush piles in the background show that the men had been hard at work. Hans Mortenson, one of the axe men in the picture, is the only worker still in Wanham. Art Tansem, Mollie Tansem, Jim Murphy, Kathleen Murphy and Vera Tansem are probably the children shown. The adults, as near as memories can recall, consisted of Bert Reid, Bill Cavanaugh, Cornelius Olsen, Richard Johnson, Pete Russo, Oscar Oakleaf, Pete Anderson, Louie Tansem, Martin and Emil Bode, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Cameron, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Leriger. The site for the

clearing project was on Duncan Cameron's homestead and was approximately 200 yards south of the present old portion of the Wanham School. The original South Slope School, built on the cleared site the following year, was moved to town not long ago and burned down last winter. A thousand memories burnt with it. July 1, 1918, saw the beginning. December, 1968 saw the end.



Sports Day - Wanham and/or Belloy Booth took the form of a bower.

THE PATH REMAINS

by L. Laughy

Yes sir! This year we had a wonderful Christmas concert and as I sat there enjoying myself to the full, I suddenly realized that I had been picked up on a magic carpet and was speeding back through time. On and on I sailed and as I travelled, I was surprised to note the people I knew were getting younger and the licence plates numbers on cars were going from 69, 68, 42, 35 and there was a car with a 1928 licence lined up at the end of the hitch rail where a number of teams were tied. Inside? Well, the faces were different but the crowd was the same. The child actors and its ODD adults also had different faces but their efforts were the same and then there was Santa. But he was having troubles and it all happened about 35 years ago in the same hall as we had

our concert in this year.

During the concert in the hall, (which was located where the U.F.A. bulk station is now) there was a lot of activity taking place downtown in the Sandercock home.

Mr. Ho Ho Ho was being dressed for gift giving, the part he was to play, but Vera Sandercock was having troubles getting the white beard to stay put. Alex Sandercock suggested that they make a paste of water and flour and paste them right on. This was done and the results were amazing. You'd have thought that the beard was genuine.

All was ready now so everyone headed for the hall. The temperature had slid to 30 below. By the time the hall was reached, the paste had frozen and Santa became a mute. There was a very simple solution to this. In the corner was a barrel stove about eight feet long, red from one end to the other and giving off about 500,000 B.T.U.'s. Well, the paste got thawed out alright and everything went just fine until that mixed up loaf of bread started to bake. Santa kept things going for a while by picking up some gifts which were near the stove and then running to the other side of the hall to give them to the children. It was only a matter of minutes before Santa's upper lip began to curl. The children noticed and started stepping back. A few minutes later the bake job was done and at that particular time, I believe, anyone could have hit him in the face with a baseball bat without making a dent.

Santa now went back to Sandercocks where the beard was to be removed. Alex was going to have one more little joke. He said, "Here are three pills, take them and it won't hurt so much removing that hard paste." Well he was right. There was no more time for hurt. Those pills were a laxative and all through the night there were trips out to the back of the lot. By morning there was a path beat to the back of the lot so deep that even though the house is gone, the path remains.

TIMES THAT WERE

From the "Faded Pages" of the Wanham Community Hall dated January 18, 1926. A dance was held at the hall. We had a fairly good attendance, mostly of ladies. Forty-eight lunches were served. Mr. Fred Pearson and Tom Mohair collected admission fees. We find that a few go to town for their lunch and thereby dodge the dance admission fees.

February 12. Meeting of committee: St. Pierre and Tansem agreed that janitor draw pay for work at hall only when called upon by one of the committee men to do so. There was a concert held in the hall. Committeeman Tansem looked after the interests of the hall and collected \$5.00 which he dutifully turned in to the treasurer. February 12 the hall was granted to George McDonald for a basket social to be held on the 15th of March for the benefit of the nurse. On February 26 the hall was granted to Ed. Prevost for a tractor school to be held March 25. Cancelled by Ed. Prevost March the 1.

On request of J.J. Baker to trustee L. Tansem, the hall was granted for a concert and dance on the evening of March 1 and requested fees of \$7.50 paid by J.J. Baker to the treasurer. February 11. Arrangements having been



Dance in the Wanham Hall. Dancers: Minnie Tansem and Sam Kenny. Seated: Mrs. D. Funk.

made with A.D. St. Pierre and L. Tansem, Ray Tansem sawed the March 25. A dance of two hours was given at the hall by Ed. Prevost to entertain the Fox-Creek people. L. Tansem looking after the interests of the hall collected \$3.00.

JULY 19, 1929

WANHAM BOARD OF TRADE REQUESTS RLY. STATION AND AGENT

The Wanham Board of Trade had a delegation interview the Railroad Commissioners in their private car between here and Roycroft, requesting a station and agent at the point. The delegation, which consisted of Mr. E. Prevost, P. Tansem, and Ed Harrington, pointed out to the commissioners the growth of the district during the past year and also had figures showing the amount of freight and express received and shipped from this point and also pointed out that the nearest agents to Wanham were at Roycroft on the west and Watino on the east, which leaves a large country which is being opened up rapidly without proper railroad services.

The commissioners are getting figures for this point from the railroad company and are to advise the Board of Trade of their decision at an early date.

Sports were held at Peoria last Friday and a good-sized crowd turned out to enjoy themselves.

First on the program was a baseball game between Peoria and Wanham, Peoria getting the best of Wanham after a hard struggle, the score reading Peoria 16, Wanham 15.

After the ball game the balance of the program was run off, which included a tug-of-war, in which Wanham beat Peoria after a hard pull.

Everyone then went to the dance floor, where dancing lasted until 3 a.m.

The new Pool elevator is fast nearing completion and the crew expect to have finished by July 27.

OCTOBER 27, 1932

Alex Sandercock is installing electric lights in his house.

United Church Services were held by Rev. Cassmore of Spirit River in the Wanham Community Hall on Thursday evening, October 20. After the meeting a discussion was held on the idea of building a church in



First came the clearing - hacking and chopping at the stubborn hidden roots. It was so hot and dusty and those mosquitoes - muscles so sore when evening came.



After the groundwork one had a little help - the oxen or horses. Sam Parlee and Mr. Mumby.



Breaking. At 5 a.m. (or earlier) you were out of bed to feed the horses - then breakfast - harnessing - out to the field to ride the bucking plough all day in dust - heat - mosquitoes. Ormiston's 12 horse outfit used from 1935-1941. Bill Ormiston driving.



Ah - Progress. This bucking, twisting monster was the John Deere-D.



The Disc - squeeling sharp edges pulverizing the soil - careful of runaways. Bill Ormiston with 12 horses on the disc.



Seeding - a bit easier but oh the dust! Jim Howard seeding.

this community. E.W. Trump was elected secretary and a committee consisting of Dr. Owens, Mrs. E.W. Trump, Roy Cameron, Oscar Gustafson, and R. Pickard were appointed to go into the matter in detail. A further meeting will be called, at which time this committee will make a full report.

THE FIRST THRESHING MACHINE IN WANHAM

Andrew Ramsfield and Peter Tansem were co-owners of the first threshing machine in Wanham. They purchased it from Pete Ruseau, one of the early farmers in the district. It was powered by a stationary engine and



Cutting - if the crop made it through drought, hail or frost. Fred Murphy on his Deering binder - the first on the Grizzly Bear Prairie.



Clickety-clack Clickety-clack - the binder kicking out tied bundles one by one. Cornelius Olson cutting grain.



Cutting Grain on the Lee Farm in Heart Valley. During the war the whole family got into the act - Ellen Lee cut 533 acres with an 8 foot binder in 1943. The Lee family in the field - Willie Noren came in his '35 Chevy to invite them to dinner.

was hand-fed. It's wheels were huge! It's weight was so great and the roads so bad at the time, that to move it posed a real problem. It was necessary to wait until the ground froze hard in the fall of the year before it was possible to move it around to the various farms. It was, of course, drawn by horses.

GRANDE PRAIRIE NORTHERN TRIBUNE - SEPTEMBER 15, 1932

WHEAT ROLLING INTO WANHAM GRADING HIGH

Wheat is beginning to roll in. A visit to the elevators



Lunch Time in the Field - Pleasant break for tired horses - binder man and stooker. Look guys! I'm a big girl now standing on the tongue!



The Crop - row upon row of stooks waiting for the threshing crews - 75 bushels to the acre.



They're Here! The crew ready to work - Teamster, field pitcher, spike pitcher, separator man. Standing, Left to Right: Dave Parlee, Sam Ramsfield, Billy Brown, Nels Jacobsen, Charlie Hanson, Art Tansem. Seated: Charlie Geller, Hans Mortenson.

elicited the information that it was practically all grading number one. Threshing so far indicates that the average will be close to 25 bushels. There are some phenomenally heavy yields reported, one being that D. Baldwin, who threshed 50 bushels to the acre on breaking.

A good percentage of the wheat grown in this area this year is Reward. Garnet is getting the top grade for that class.





Here They Come! Threshing machine, granary and bundle racks. Leonard Metz on the steamer.



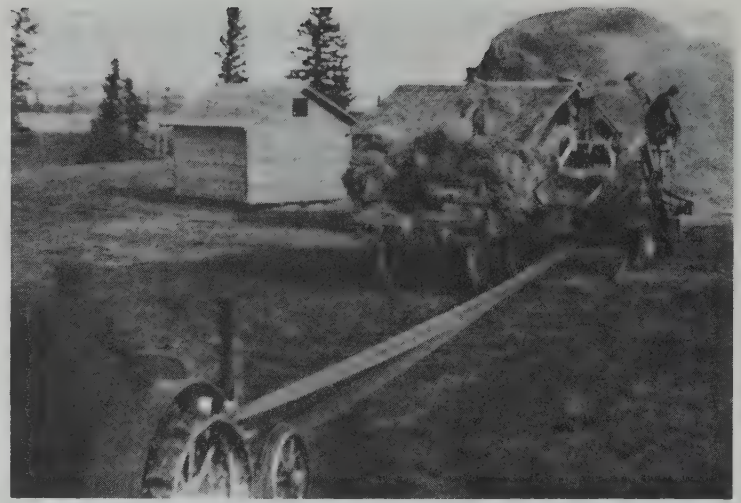
The First Load - Ready to Go. Bill Pranskat hauling bundles.



In Action! Steamer, bundle teams, grain team. Metz Steamer.



Coffee Time! You took your break in shifts - hopefully doughnuts and an apple and big buckets of warm coffee. People unknown.



Back to Work - usually until dark - then into the barn loft or the straw pile for a sound sleep - rest for weary, aching muscles.

AUGUST 2, 1929

WANHAM TO GET A STATION AND AGENT

J. Callaghan, general manager, and Mr. Deacon, superintendent of the Northern Alberta Railways, stopped off here on Tuesday to look into Wanham Board of Trade's request for a station agent at this point. Driving around the country, they were very much surprised at the size and development of the territory which would be served by a station agent here. Mr. Callaghan requested a meeting of the Board of Trade on Thursday, when they would return and talk things over.

At this later meeting, after considerable discussion, Mr. Callaghan pointed out that it would be necessary to have the expenditure passed by the directors and that it would not be possible to do that in time to have the work done this summer. but if the Board of Trade would accept a caretaker and the repairing of the present station, he would put in his estimates and have things ready for an early start next spring and that when finished it would be a job which Wanham could be proud of.

After talking over conditions in the district and getting other information required, Messrs. Callaghan and Deacon left on a speeder for the east.

ALONG THE TRAIL

by J.B. Yule

WANHAM-PEORIA

Over the week-end it was the writer's privilege to visit the Wanham and Peoria District. The trip was made with Rev. E.A. Wright as far as Wanham. Now there may be those who would hesitate to travel with a minister but so far as the author of "Along the Trail" is concerned, being a grandson of a Presbyterian minister and having spent a good portion of my boyhood days at a manse, the adjustment was not difficult.

The trip, so far as the scribe was concerned, primarily was made in the interest of The Tribune. We arrived shortly after noon. Of course the first thing that crossed



The road to Peoria in the Summer.

my mind was to take on some fuel - not for the car but for myself. Following dinner I started out to make a survey of the village which I had not seen since three years ago when with Norman Moon I attended the famous barbecue put on by the old-timers of the district - a red letter day in the history of the community. It seemed good when several remarked: "I know you. You were here at the time of the barbecue."

Since that time Wanham has strengthened its position as an important distributing centre serving Peoria and the Heart Valley country to the south and the rapidly developing district north of the railway.

Wanham lies nestled amidst beautiful high timber. With no intention of dictating to the Wanham Board of Trade, it would be a pity if the time ever came when the timber surrounding the village was entirely cut down. This timber is not only a thing of beauty in the summer but a wonderful protection in the winter. As the land surrounding the village is owned, we were informed, by old-timers it seems all that is necessary is that a request go out from the Board of Trade to have a fringe of this timber left around the village.

From the train one gets the impression that Wanham is just a country covered with timber. However, a ride in and around the country quickly dissipates this idea.

Among the homes worthy of mention is that of Mrs. E.D. Prevost. On the left of this neat artistic home is a windbreak of Manitoba maples. Towards the back of the garden is a beautiful summer house which is covered with clinging vines. Along the front is a caragana hedge. There was a bed of flowers still untouched by the frost. A large rose was still in full bloom. Numerous shrubbery plants were scattered throughout the garden. The house and grounds surrounding demonstrate just what can be accomplished in the way of making a home beautiful.

In conversation with residents of Wanham I was struck with the optimism expressed even under prevailing conditions. The businessmen in Wanham know they have a good village for the reason that they know there is a good country from which to draw.

I would like to mention in passing that there was a pathetic side to the visit. Some whom I met three years ago had passed away, among them E.D. Prevost and Duncan Cameron.

Of course, I wanted to go to the Peoria District and see the country of which I had heard so much. Coupled with this I wanted to see my old friend, O.L. Toftner. How

was I to get there? This problem was settled when another old friend, Louis Tansem came along and informed me that D. St. Pierre, who runs a bakery at Wanham, would run me out in the morning.

While enjoying my morning sleep I was awakened by a rap at my bedroom door in the Wanham Hotel. "The bus is ready," and I recognized the voice of Louis Tansem.

In a short time we were on our way to the Peoria country. Just before we left, "Dolph" informed us that he had a batch of bread which he would have to get into the oven about noon. It has been said that trains and women wait for no man. We would like to add to this "bread".

The road winds its way through the Birch Hills and in some places I got the impression I was travelling through a beautiful park.

"Dolph" who drove the car though scantily clad did not seem to feel the cold. Hatless he sang songs and never murmured about the cold which the writer felt not yet having discarded his B.D.V.'s for heavier underwear.

The driver was not quite sure of the turn to take and picked the wrong one. This proved of great advantage to the scribe as it enabled him to see much more of the Peoria country than was intended.

What is known as the Peoria country embraces about two townships stretching beyond the Wanham-Heart Valley road on the west and the Smoky on the east. On the north we have the Birch Hills and on the south, beyond the Heart Valley, an extension of the Saddle Mountains.

Nestled within these heights of land, which is in a sense a valley, is what is known as the Peoria and Heart Valley country. We regret that time would not permit pushing on into the Heart Valley. However, we hope in the near future to be able to make the trip. Bread sometimes is a horrible nuisance.

What struck me was the number of substantial houses and barns and well kept farms in the district.

Finally the car pulled up at the Toftner home. As we got out of our bus, which was a Ford of rather ancient vintage and open, we spied Mr. Toftner in the barnyard. He immediately entered a building, which we found afterwards was his garage and handy shop to which is attached his office.

"Did you think we were a bunch of collectors" asked Louis. "Not at all," replied Toftner. "I knew you would find me anyway so I thought I would be comfortable in the meantime."

Last year Mr. Toftner built a large home. His son farms an adjoining quarter. Through these farms runs lanes from which sufficient hay is harvested to make several large stacks. As one of the party observed, "I was out here before the crop was cut and these lanes, coupled with the grain, presented a most beautiful sight."

Everything about the place was spic and span. In the yard is a dam in which a number of wild ducks were swimming. These ducks evidently saw the light of day rather late in the season.

The fat was in the fire - no we mean the bread was in the pan - and our visit was naturally of a hurried nature. However, I talked fast - so fast, in fact, that my old friend who, as a rule, is not adverse to an animated

discussion, did not have a chance to say much except to answer questions. During the short stay we learned a few things about the country from Mr. Toftner who is the oldest settler there, having filed on his land in 1920. He told us that the wheat should average about 25 bushels to the acre and the oats 60 bushels.

There is a sawmill outfit in the district which has been in operation for the past number of years. It is owned and run by George Reiswig, formerly of the Clairmont District, and W.J. Rottacker. We were informed that the cut this year was about 800,000 feet.

The section at the west end of the district is known as the Westvale community. Here are to be seen some of the neatest log cabins, mostly of the bungalow type that one could wish to see. Farther west is Kakut Lake, about two miles square, the centre of an excellent hunting area.

As we got into the car, Mr. Toftner remarked to the writer, "well, I am sorry that you cannot spend several days so that you could see this country right." So was I.

As we left the valley I looked back at the lovely fertile country and vowed I would, as soon as possible, spend several days in the district, the guest, I hope, of Mr. Toftner.

The Burnt River, over which one passes to and from Wanham, was wonderful. The winding trail ran through trees which were beginning to change color which at once reminded one that grim old winter was none too far away. The bank on this side was also tinted with the frost which gave the appearance of a variegated carpet.



Mr. and Mrs. St. Pierre.

ONLY A WILLOW TREE

by Wallace Tansem

Mary Gilmour was the first person to be buried by settlers on the Grizzly Bear Prairie. Mary's coffin was of spruce. The tree that was used to make it was carried on men's shoulders from the Birch Hills south of Belloy. Her father and brothers fashioned the tree into lumber. By hand they carefully tongue and grooved the boards and made her final bed.

A willow tree - nothing more - now marks her grave and the grave of six others. In the open cultivated field only a teardrop shaped piece of unbroken land remains and yet seven times on this piece of land people in sorrow stood near newly dug graves and watched family

members lowered to their final sleep.

The land is the quarter section on the east side of the road at the Belloy turnoff on Highway 49.

It was owned by the Gilmour family until a few years ago when it was purchased by Bill Lunn. The Lunn's have replaced the weatherworn buildings with a new modern home. A short quarter mile to the east of the building site lies the plot of land that was our district's first cemetery.

The Gilmours arrived by sleigh at Belloy in March of 1915. Mary Gilmour was in her late twenties and it was mostly because of her health that the new land was sought. But it was to no avail. Soon after their arrival, Mary died.

There was no cemetery and in fact the land itself had not been surveyed. Permission was obtained from the R.C.M.P. to bury Mary on the land. The Gilmours set about measuring the land from the range line by the old Wiegel place. When Mary's grave was dug it was thought it was in the corner of the quarter. After the survey came through it was found that it was nearly in the middle of the homestead.

Some two years later another grave, that of Ole Osberg, would find its place beside Mary.

Pioneers came into our valley in the early years, stayed for a short time and left. Their names today are but faintly remembered. Nothing of where they came from or where they went can be recalled. Ole Osberg seems to have fallen into this group. Little was known of him except that he was Swedish. He was no relation to P. Osbergs of Belloy. He remained in the valley - a victim of the deadly flu of 1918.

In the next two years the two stillborn children of Mr. and Mrs. Pres Bankhead would also be laid to rest. In March of 1920 their mother, Mrs. Pres Bankhead, would join them, another victim of the killer flu.

In May of 1931 Mr. and Mrs. Ira Gilmours' baby daughter became the sixth person to be buried there. Robert Gilmour, father of the Gilmour family, was the last of the seven to be laid to rest in the little cemetery. It was his request that he be buried on the homeplace.

So, for the past 66 years, the little plot of land has stood. Through the efforts of Chris Bankhead and the Gilmours the little cemetery has been preserved. Chris had a one acre plot of land set aside. The government of Alberta and I.D. 19 have now allotted funds to protect the site and to point out that here on this part of the Grizzly Bear Prairie the first of our pioneers rest. And maybe the little willow tree will never feel the bite of the plough but maybe it will grow and branch out and be the marker of this spot which is part of our history.

AUGUST 20, 1936

The Wanham Mercantile Store was sold recently to a Mr. Hill from High River. The business will change hands September 1.

We welcome this newcomer in our midst and can assure him that he has picked a good business and a good location.

Mr. E.J. Harrington, who in the future will be our local postmaster, intends to move into St. Pierre's bakery

where he will also look after the International Harvester and other agencies.

FIRE IN THE PEACE

by Sam Parlee

The morning of May 12th, 1931, came out bright and beautiful in the Peace country of northern Alberta. A soft breeze continued to blow from the west. It was a wonderful day on which to be alive.

The six big horses moved along at a lively clip as we closed in on the last piece of back-setting (the first ploughing after the breaking crop).

By noon the wind was stronger and a tower of smoke appeared on the western horizon.

The preceeding winter had been unusually mild with only a trace of snow. No rain had fallen thus far that spring. The stage was set for what turned out to be a forest fire burning out of control.

With the ash continuing to fall in the shape of spruce needles, it was quite evident that the forest of spruce and pine to the west of us had taken fire.

At that time, settlers were just commencing to get established in the new country. Some had only a small acreage broken. Many had put up their buildings with no protection in the way of cultivated land. Our layout lay sprawled over a considerable acreage on a sunny slope, with many barns, corrals and granaries. The partly eaten stacks of bundles in the feed yard were a potential hazard in the wake of the holocaust bearing down upon us.

Circling the entire building site with furrows some distance apart, I burned out the intervening strips. When my brother Buck came home from school, he helped me to back fire, which gave a great deal of protection.

My brother Tom, who had been working on another field, put his horses in the barn and set out on foot to help my mother and dad who had gone to save their place a half a mile north. Their house was still under construction and my dad had been working on it at the time. The house was built of logs which were hewn as each log was fitted onto the wall. Chips lay everywhere as the upper and lower joists had been hewn also. The folks had labored all morning raking up the chips and dead grass and had it not been for the creek which was very close as a water supply, there was no way they could have saved their house nor the piles of logs which were intended for other buildings.

Tall dry grass and pea-vine, typical of the parkland of the Peace, lay matted by the ton on every acre of my dad's homestead, with the exception of ten acres of planted wheat.

Unlike those of us who were defending the first building site, my folks had no fire guard except what they had been able to create by scraping the sod with hand tools.

The fires in the forest and parklands are greater by far than on the prairies. The writer, having been brought up on the prairie, had considerable experience with fire which swept over the plains. In the forest of spruce and pine the fire roars through the tree tops at a terrific rate on account of the resinous type of tree. The dead wood,

the leaf mold and the green wood, whether conifer or deciduous, all become a part of the raging inferno.

While the evergreen forest did not extend unto our own holdings, nevertheless, it did provide the firey front for our sparsely wooded area.

The fire did bear down upon us with great fury, both at the place we inhabited and the new place, all at the same time.

At the new place the fire had free course right up to the house. It licked at the walls even though they had been splashed with water from the creek. It started fires in the piles of hewn timber. The determined trio fought hard in the dense smoke with water and wet sacks and by spreading the timbers out on the charred ground.

They did save their place that day and the big house still stands as a monument to the heroic efforts of those couragous pioneers.

So great was the intensity of the heat that the wheat on the ten acre field east of the house was scorched halfway across the field as the blaze was able to run on the decayed root fibre on the back-setting.

When Tom felt that the danger was passed at the new place, he returned to the original homestead which we were defending. He came through the burnt over area even though blazing trees were falling. He found that we encountered no such task as they had undergone on account of the wide fire guard..

One man came through the yard on horseback, where I was fireguarding, at full gallop and headed west to the burnt over area. His wife and child were living on their homestead while he worked for a farmer some ten miles east. He had not been gone long when he reappeared out of the heavy smoke. His house had been burned to a char but there was no evidence of his family. At that time a lad came into the yard. The man who had been riding slapped the boy into the saddle and told him to ride hard and fast to the owner of the horse who was the man's employer. His orders were that men should come and search for the missing mother and child. The men did come, including my brother Wilfred, who was working in that community. They all joined in the search though the darkness had come on. By that time they found the woman. She had taken refuge on a field of breaking and had protected herself and her child by crouching down and covering the face of the child with a damp cloth from the house.

It was discovered later that after she had left the house, the stumping powder stored in the house by her husband had blown the roof completely off of the house. The roof landed on the same field in which the lady had taken refuge.

Some others lost their homes in that fire but ultimately they rebuilt. Millions of board feet of lumber were destroyed that day. What damage to wild life was suffered no one will ever know. Most of the territory burned over in that fire is under cultivation now. Many beautiful homes now stand where the virgin forest fell beneath the flame. A new generation has come and with it new challenges, new hopes for the future. Those of us who recall the days of fire and toil and tears, bequeath this wonderful land of fertility and beauty to the people of a new day.

We trust that they shall cherish and preserve this priceless heritage.

THE FIRE AT JIM MUNROE'S

In the early times we settlers spent a great deal of time clearing land. For weeks on end we windrowed the deadfall by hand, grubbed out the standing trees, pulled the stumps and hoisted them onto the windrows. Finally the day came when wind and weather conditions were right and we lit the entire field on fire even though it meant going out at night to turn in the ends.

Our nearest neighbor Jim had a different way. We could always tell if he were in the vicinity by the smoke of his fire. Jim's first move was to get a fire started and then carry wood to keep it going. At times, while stoking one fire, another could be burning out of control.

It was in the spring of 1931 just such a scene was evident from our yard. Everything was tinder dry as there had been only a skiff of snow in the winter. We could see the fire getting close to Jim's log granary so my brothers Tom, Wilfred and I set off on the run for half a mile to the building which was partly full of wheat. Paul Nagel and Nels Lee had also seen what was taking place so they arrived there on foot as the fire bit into the dry straw pile and from there to the straw on the flat pole covering on the granary. It was too late to save the building but we did save the grain. A cable was made by twisting two strands of barb-wire together with a loop on one end and a spruce pole as a crossbar on the other. We were able to snare one log at a time out of the burning inferno. Fortunately, the logs had been flat-notched at the corners with the ends protruding. We would take turns at running to the blazing building to snare a log and then pull for all our might. Every log was pulled out of the 30 foot building even though the straw pile and the roof burned up.

Another neighbor, Harry Cairns, was away for the winter but his little shack built of B.C. cedar lumber was just across the road. I had stooked for Harry and shared his hospitality and I knew that he had two water pails inside his dwelling. The place was banked with sods nearly to the roof. The door was locked but a tiny cellar sash was high up in the north. I climbed up on the banking and managed to loosen the sash and scramble in.

Thus was born West Vale's first fire department. We formed a bucket brigade from the spring about forty feet from the fire. By splashing water on the pile of wheat we were able to save most of it. People came from far and near to buy grain for feed that spring and summer.

BUNDLES AGLOW *by Sam Parlee*

The gold and purple twilight of a mid-September evening gave a sure and certain promise that we would have continuing good weather for another day. The teams drawing towering loads of wheat bundles drew into an orderly line. The 15-30 McCormick-Deering droned in the distance as it drew the Sawyer-Massey thresher to the pre-determined sight on the Hudson Bay quarter.

This was 1932 with forty acres of wheat to thresh in

order to complete the harvest of that year. The wheels were eased into the 'goose pits' with care and the belt rolled out, the steel wheeled tractor backed into the belt and with the break set and a block thrown in front of the hind wheel we were ready for business. Dad cranked the blower out with one hand and with the other gave the signal for the engineer to put the belt in motion.

My brother, Dave, pulled in with Dolly and Punch, tied up the lines and began to drop bundles on the feeder canvas. The golden straw floated in a beautiful crescent high in the evening air and down. A tiny dome-shaped stack was forming fast and the threshed wheat pouring into the bin. Then came a flash of fire from the cylinder followed by fire raining down from the blower.

Dave quit his pitching and all hands were on deck to examine the machine for heated bearings. A careful examination, however, revealed nothing out of the ordinary about the machine. But with the aid of a flashlight we found scores of burnt matches in the grain.

We had no alternative now but to start for home. What could be done about the wheat still unthreshed? This was one question to be settled. Was it safe to put sheaves through that were loaded with matches? The thresher was the wooden type with oaken beams and wood paneling on her sides. We decided to continue if possible.

The morning dawned with all the beauty one could desire for early autumn.

Fire came out the blower as before. Dad cranked on the blower and I beat out the flames; in this way we saved the straw which we needed in those days but it did result in a number of small stacks.

We finally discovered that the matches came from one side of the field. The men felt the sheaves over and found rolls of matches bound with binder-twine. It was a great relief when the last bundle was through.

FIRE ON THE HILL *by Sam Parlee*

Smoke spiraled upward from the hay meadow which lay on the wooded slope of the Saddle Hills. From my point of vantage I watched with concern and apprehension.

It soon became apparent that I had little choice but to leave my team at the end of the field and inform the widower, who was ploughing on the Joe Downey place, that his homestead was in imminent danger of being destroyed by fire.

Bill Hallock had lost his beloved wife, Mary, two years prior to this and had set about to raise his three children alone. At this moment Shirley, aged five, sat in her dad's lap, curly haired, dark eyed and beautiful. Alfred, aged seven and Darrel, aged three, both curly and cute, made castles in the freshly turned furrows.

Bill saw me coming and drew in his four horse team to await the message from the runner. Somewhat out of breath, I managed to tell Bill that a fire was burning in his pasture and that I felt that no time should be lost if we were to save his house and barn.

Hoisting the beam of the high-lift gang, Bill, a man of few words faced his team toward home. I seized the small boy and fell in line behind the swift moving plow. The

little lad howled and struggled to be free but I held him fast. What a strange procession we made that afternoon in early May, 1935.

The horses were reaching right out now in a swift trot, manes flying in the breeze. Bill was a born horseman who knew how to hold a pair of lines. One faulty move now could bring disaster, one minute late and the wee log house and barn could be devoured by the flames.

As we rounded the hill, which had cut off Bill's line of vision, it was quite evident that the fire was moving with great rapidity. We were on the home stretch now with the men and horses putting out with every fibre of their being.

Foot racing was a thing in which I had delighted all of my life but never before had I attempted such a feat. My arms ached but I had no alternative. That half mile and more was terrific.

It is at such a time as this that you are closer to those whom you love. This precious babe within my arms, that lad on the trail behind me, that man and his little daughter on the plow, suddenly became very dear.

Reaching the door of the little dwelling, I slid Darrel inside, then lifted Shirley from her father's lap. I told them both to stay in and that Alfred would soon be there. I kept an eye on the trail as I carried buckets of water from the spring into which some gunny sacks were placed for emergency. Alfred hove in sight and joined the other two in the house.

Bill dropped his plow into the heavy gumbo sod and commenced to circle the buildings. The flames crackled like fury and at times we were in heavy clouds of smoke. At times we would have fire inside our fireguard. One did not know just what the end would be with everything so tinder dry.

There were times when the furrows fell back, these had to be turned by hand.

After a heavy struggle it was apparent that we had won out and the danger was past. As we neared the house I observed that the children had the door open wide waiting for their dad. After thanking me for helping through this firey ordeal, Bill related the story of how he and Mary had fought a fire that had threatened their home some years earlier.

As I made my way back to my team, I realized that while I had lost the greater part of an afternoon I had gained a friend for life.



Forest fire north of Wanham.

VALLEY AFLAME

by Sam Parlee

The smoke hung heavy o'er the blackened vale,
The moon turned red, the stars refused to shine.
On either hand the hills were aglow
To mark the place once held by lofty pine.

The night hawk zoomed, the bats came out to play,
As weary settlers tread the scorching trail
To learn how each had fared that awful day
When fire swept in with high and lofty gale.

Some shantys fell beneath the raging blaze,
And with them all their lode of earthly store,
And there were some who scarce escaped with life
While beating flames right at the vary door.

In mem'ries eye I see the ageing pair
Whose home still stands beside the murm'ring stream
The holocaust bore down upon them there
While toiling hard to carry out their dream.
The new log dwelling crowned the Kakut bank
Two stories high with walls all hewn and true
While round it lay the sun burned matted grass
A bed where that man's chips so often flew.

They wet the walls with water from the brook,
Then beat the flames with all their main and might.
I cannot tell what might have been their lot
Had Tom not gone to help in their fight.

Yea brother Tom had run through trees aflame
To help his folks and then came back again
What trial and testing, toil and tears
What suffering, sacrifice and pain.

- An account of the fire of 1931 in the West Vale District.



Bill Davis holding his purebred Percheron - Ogden Flashlight.

SADDLE BAG VET

by Sam Parlee

Hauling logs to the sawmill in the winter of 1930-31, I

first caught sight of a man who was to become a friend for the next forty years. Bill Davis spun the logs off in record time from every towering load, then with sleigh-bells tinkling merrily, headed his big team of bays toward the Birch Hills for another. Bill was endowed with more than his fair share of physical strength and many skills lay at his stubby finger tips.

Turning ones hand from one thing to another was a must for most pioneers and Bill was in no way an exception to the rule. As logger, farmer, rancher, blacksmith, veterinarian, and entertainer, this man was a friend to all who knew him.

Hail and hearty, stalky of build, Bill Davis was on call for many a year throughout this and other neighbourhoods. Before the advent of telephone, many a man or boy would land at Bill's place on horseback or at times on foot or by team to get help with a sick cow or horse. No night was too dark or too cold for our tanned, mustached and sometimes stubbly bearded friend. Mounting his saddle-horse in the night with a few simple remedies, Bill would accompany the one who had come for help over some strange and difficult roads.

More often than not some of these calls were time consuming and when Bill was asked what his figure would be, he would say "I never make no charges, if a feller wants ta give me somethen, that's up ta him. I ain't in this fer what I cun make out of it," he would add "just as long as I can help a man out, that's what I wanta do." As he helped us he had evidently helped others.

On many occasions when the more arduous part of our problems were settled, Bill would entertain us with an incident in his eventful past. One such narrative went like this: "I was away threshin' one fall haulin' bunnels for a feller an the dog back at home got into a porkypine an got his face jist full o quills. Well, he musta knowed where I wus, for he came all the way fer five miles ta git to me an when I seen im I said, "Come Rover" an I put his head under my arm and took the pliers out o my pocket an I pulled every one o them there quills out. Well, sir he never let out even a howl. Then when I got through, I give im a pat an told im ta go home, an he just stood there an wagged his tail like he wus tryin ta thank me fer what I'd done fer im, an then he turned and went straight fer home."

The black-smith shop on the Davis farm was a source of inspiration to many as this sturdy pioneer did the welding without aid of electricity or acetylene. Sharpening plough shares, shrinking wagon tires and shoeing horses was common procedure.

Before the advent of modern road-building equipment, Bill served as road foreman. The culverts and bridges were built of native timber. The fills were put in with horse-drawn scrapers. Wherever a road had to be put through heavy stands of timber, the stumps had to be removed with a stump puller.

Though Bill's blacksmith tools have been preserved his stump puller is gone, to where no one seems to know. His threshing outfit, like his stallion, is but a pleasant dream of the past.

Bill too, is gone, but he leaves memories to be cherished by a host of friends who knew him as a man who was eager and willing to go the second mile.



Fred Nelson in front of his shack. He was drowned in 1933 in a dam on Martin Bode's land, then rented by Cliff and Mollie Tansem.



The General Store, Hardware store and Garage - Main Street Wanham. People in front unknown.



Number Please? Eva Shea at the switchboard.

JULY 2, 1936

Wanham Sports, Wednesday, June 24, went off with a bang! Many ball games were enjoyed. Spirit River men took first money and Wanham second in the men's baseball. Wanham ladies won the softball and Wanham school defeated Belloy.

A capacity crowd enjoyed the dance at night. Music was supplied by Mrs. English, Bud Halverson, Lewis Hoeght and Joe Jasbec.

Much credit is due the committee which so ably handled events and made the day such a success.

The Wanham Board of Trade is sponsoring the building of a sidewalk from the station to the hotel. Cost is being borne by the local businessmen and other public-spirited citizens.



Lyle Tansem at the telegraph desk in the Wanham Railroad Station House.

REMEMBER WHEN -

Irving Reiswig remembers Dan Reiswig having a sawmill in his own yard in 1927. Fred Reiswig was doing the logging. Irving drove the horses and Delmer Reiswig rolled the logs. He wasn't big enough to handle the Canthook by himself so Delmer helped him. This slowed down the pace for the rest so Charlie Morris helped them.

Harold Reiswig remembers the post office starting at George Reiswigs. From there it went to Pete Reiswig, Charlie Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Dorse Prosser, Mrs. Eve Krenzler and Mr. and Mrs. Jake Brucks. Bruckses had it for 16 years and then rural mail delivery came to this area. Some of the mail haulers were: Fred Reiswig, Pete Reiswig, Red McLean, Mr. Bozarth, Gulicks, Ole Lindjard, Mr. Ranstead, and Mrs. Mildred Alley.

If you've thought of Harold Reiswig as being the only store owner in Peoria, well, that's only part of the story. Harold and Ruby have had the business for the longest period of time. Harold started out in a small business in 1934. He had a few items of canned food like tomatoes. He bought dried dates in 70 pound boxes and broke pieces off the bulk and sold it by the pound - 10 or 15¢ a pound. Sometimes a person made a whole meal out of dates. He operated a gas and oil business with his grocery store, starting out with the B.A. Oil Company. In 1935 he switched to Imperial Oil Company and had a service certificate from the company. The first year of business,



Rottacker's Millsite.

the grocery end of his business sold \$700.00 worth gross. Others who had a small store were: George Reiswig, Albert Wright, Dorse Prosser, and Alfred Reiswig.

Many times Harold Reiswig went to Wanham to bring out the nurse to someone who was ill in the community. He had a vehicle and the roads were usually open from the store to Wanham.

The men working at Rottackers sawmill were paid \$2.00 per day in lumber. They traded the lumber for cash sometimes, usually for less cash than the lumber was worth. Dan Yanke delivered \$20.00 worth of lumber to Harold Reiswig for \$10.00 cash because he wanted the cash to go to Rycroft Campmeeting.

John Borland took a load of oats to the elevator at Belloy. As he went by Archibald's store, he left his grocery list there. The grocery list included 12 cans of chewing tobacco. John's grain cheque was less than \$6.00 and the chewing tobacco was over \$4.00. So that left him with less than \$2.00 for groceries. He left the chewing tobacco there and took groceries in its place for that time.

Charlie and Grace Leggatt came to this country with a fine, fancy clock in their possession. In hard times they had to sell the clock to buy food.

Albert Davis remembers Maurice and Mona Griffiths came home late one night, crawled into bed and were almost asleep when they heard a thumping or light knocking sound (similar to a pack rat's tap, tap) coming



Rottacker's Mill at Peoria. Look for: Carl Best, Louis Kozak, Don Best, Jake Berg, Walter Oson, Dan Yanke, Bob Kandt, Herb Reichenbach, Orville Berg, Ezra Reiswig, Calvin Rottacker. Emil Janot and Will Rottacker standing at right.

from under the bed. Horrified to find a skunk under their bed in the dark, they held the quilt between them and cautiously ushered the little varmint out the door. Much relieved they went back to bed. Before the night was over, they repeated that 'ushering out' process three more times!

Bill Ganz raised chickens when he lived in Peoria. He was out late on a date one night and came home long after dark. As he opened the door of his house, he could hear a 'clucking' sound and fumbled in the dark to get a lamp lit. Someone had put the 'broody' hens in his house and they had left their calling cards on the floor. While slipping on the floor trying to chase the hens out, he was muttering in German and Irving and friends were in the trees in the little creek behind the house trying desperately to keep their giggles under control. In desperation some of them had to flee before they would burst out laughing. Some of the hardier fellows stayed in the cover of the bushes until Bill threw out all the hens, cleaned the floor and his feet!

Irving Reiswig and Harvey Comm saw a moose with a calf out in an open field so they decided to get a much better look. Warren Rottacker stayed by the vehicle. They left their truck on the road and started across the field on foot. Now that was one very unhappy mama moose that was watching these fellows coming toward her. She curled her lip back, lowered her head and charged them. Irving and Harvey broke all records getting back to the truck and when their feet did hit the ground they stumbled, but that didn't slow anyone. Irving recalls Harvey was the first one to the truck. One dove under the truck and mama moose was snorting and pawing the ground ready to charge the vehicle.

Almost everyone is aware that hunting at night is strictly illegal. Consequently Dave Kandt became very curious after a couple of nights seeing a vehicle, with lights on, drive past his place. He wondered what in the world anyone would want down there at night. So after the vehicle had gone by again, he got out his truck and drove down without lights. As he drew close to the truck, he put his lights on only to see three very sober friends of his - Irving, Harold Dick, and Louie Kozak. Relief is an understatement for the way they felt when it was Dave that got out to talk to them. Needless to say, there were no more night lights past Kandt's place!



Herb Reichenbach hauling water for Rottacker's steam engine.

REMINISCENCES

by Art Tansem

HE WENT THAT-A-WAY

I remember one Sport's Day at the Steele School down by Belloy. They used to have horse races and stuff there. Charlie Gellar had a nice fat mare - real nice horse, you know - but he didn't enter in the races or anything, he just liked to show off his nice saddlemare.

So Charlie rides in and stops right in front of the booth. Mother and Mrs. Murphy and some other women were in there. I'm not sure what happened ... Charlie must have touched the horse or some darn thing. Anyway all of a sudden the mare let out a big "poop" and reared up bucking Charlie off. And, he turns around and says to the women in the booth, "Now, what do I get for that?" He thought he should get a prize or something.

So then when they started this one horse race - they raced down a field about half a mile long, I guess. Oscar Oakleaf was in it. He had a peg leg, you know, and it was quite a bit longer than his other leg. I can still see old Oscar in that race. He started way over on the right side of the field and the horse kept veering off to the left because of this long leg of Oscar's. Well, when they finished the race, Oscar and his horse ended up way off track.

HOW TRUE

Then there was the time they were threshing up at Pete Rousseau's place. It was Hans Mortensen's and Charlie Gellar's outfit and Oscar was hauling grain with his team and wagon. They kept going as long as they could at night but this one night, come suppertime, Oscar decided he'd had enough. So he unhitched his team and put them in the barn. Then when Charlie came in for supper he says to Oscar, "What happened to you? We wanted you back there to thresh more grain in your wagon." And Oscar, he answers, "Well, the longer I live, the more I learn." "And the less you know," Charlie said.

THE PLACE

Once a bunch from Wanham got together - there was Art Ramsfield and I, Tommy Mohar and Emil Bode and some others, I can't remember who all. Anyway there was a meeting or something up in Spirit River and the bunch of us took the train up there. Well, we got hold of a bottle or two of moonshine and we were celebrating quite a bit. So that night when the train came back, we all got on to go home. We were all pretty high and causing quite a ruckus so the old conductor, Joe Culp was his name, he comes along and says, "All you guys from Wanham, we got a special coach for you."

So they stick us all in the old car, you know, and every once in a while one of us would go the the door and ask what the next stop was. Everybody else on the train was looking at us kinda funny, you know, guess they thought we were a real rowdy bunch.

Well, we finally got to Wanham and it took quite a

while to unload the bunch of us - we were all pretty high yet. After that, the Wanham Station was known as the place where they let all the drunks off the train.

THE KADOT

The Kadot out south used to go on the rampage once in a while and I remember one spring there was about 4 feet of snow and it all thawed in darn near a day and the old creek was really high and wild. McNee and Meadus had a couple of sows out there and Meadus brought them in to George MacDonald's to have them serviced. So the next day Pete McNee went to pick them up and by the time he got back to Kadot it was dark. Pete knew there was a lot of water in there but he figured he could get across. The darn team got into this thing, you know, and there was so much water that the current swept the team down the creek. Well, there was a big brush pile down stream away and the horses landed in this brush pile and couldn't get out. The water took the old sleigh box and threw it up in on the bank and old McNee got tossed out on the bank - the only thing that saved him. Then there were these two pigs in the crates. McNee's sow had her snout sticking above the water which saved her but Meadus' pig drowned.

That same spring Mrs. Peebles was giving birth and turned out she needed the nurse. So Harold and Art Peebles rode down to the Kadot on saddle horses and they knew they couldn't get across with horses so they laid a big spruce tree across. Well, they tied a couple of horses up on their side and fed them up and Harold walked across the spruce and on into town. We had a bunch of horses there and Harold asked me to take him and Miss Brighty, the nurse, back out to the Kadot. By the time we got out there it was pitch dark - you couldn't see a thing. Peebles had bought one of these big 3 carton packages of wooden matches and they were going to light our way across this big spruce. Boy! that Miss Brighty had a lot of nerve - you sure gotta hand it to her. I'd brought some oats along for my horses so I fed them up and then Harold handed me some matches and told me I should go first and light the way for Miss Brighty. Well, this spruce was about that big around and you had to walk along hanging onto the limbs so you didn't fall in the water. So, anyway, I went ahead lighting matches to show the way, Miss Brighty followed me and Harold was behind her lighting matches. We all made it across and I went up and stayed with Art Peebles that night.

The next morning Art and I went down there so I could start home and Art noticed right away that the feed he'd used for his horses the day before had been cleaned right up. It didn't take me long to figure out what had happened. I'd brought a little grey horse of Ray's along with me and you couldn't tie that horse up - he was always loose. Well, that little begger had seen that feed across the creek and had swum across and cleaned it up. Actually, I thought he'd drowned going back because he was nowhere around. But, when I got home he was standing in front of the barn waiting for me. Anyway, that night Miss Brighty delivered one of the Peeble's babies, I think it was Henry.

HOLD ON

There was this time old Eli Barrett decided to take up music, I remember. He got the course through the mail. Cost him quite a bit of money too. But, anyway, he learned to play the violin. Now, Uncle Louis (Tansem) and Don Monroe and I used to play for the dances around here. I played drums and guitar, Don played piano and Louis played the violin. So, every once in a while old Eli would decide he wanted to play with us. So he'd bring out his old violin - he kept it in one of these grain sacks with all his music just thrown in there, it was always all mixed up - and play with us. The only problem was he played by note and we all played by ear. So everytime we all played a tune together, Eli would finish up about two or three minutes before the rest of us.



Vera Tansem and Jack Garrett.

OKAY BLANCHE

Old Eli Barrett was the kind of person who did everything in a big hurry. I remember one time we were out at Cameron's sawing wood or something and come time for dinner we all went in and sat down. Of course, Eli finished his meal long before the rest of us and he says, "Blanche, what have you got for dessert?"

"Well, Mr. Barrett," she says, "I've got some pie." So old Eli says, "Well, trot 'er on".

BROKEN LEG

Starritt had a homestead out south. In fact, my place joined onto his. One day he was chopping brush along this creek to make a brush fence to keep his cattle in. He had two boys and one of them happened to go out to where he was chopping these trees and Starritt didn't see him. He cut this darn tree down and somehow broke the kid's leg. There they were - they couldn't drive because there was no road there - they had to get through on this old pack trail. So Starritt rounded up some guys to help him. They had to go across the Kadot to Heart Valley to get help. There were about 8 men, I think, and they put this boy on a stretcher and packed him all the way to town. They kept changing off, 4 men at a time. Somebody had come ahead and told Mother they were bringing this boy in so they could get him on the train. It

just happened there was supposed to be a train come through sometime the next day. We were never sure what time, it just came when it got there. Course Mother went to work and got supper ready for these guys - there was quite a bunch of them and, of course, Mrs. Starritt came along too. There must have been 12 or 13 people all together. Anyway, they had supper at our place and some of them stayed overnight at our place and the rest went and stayed at Ramsfield's up on the old Leriger place. Next morning when the train came in, they put this kid on and sent him to Spirit River to get fixed up.

HEAD DOWN

I remember the time a telegram came in for George MacDonald and Dad asked me to take it out to him on my saddlehorse. Sam Ramsfield and I were just riding around town. We were always racing and of course, that horse I had could beat anything here in Wanham. Anyway, I got down to MacDonald's and turned in at the gate. Turned out there was this old turkey gobbler guarding his hen's nest right by the gate post and I didn't see the darn thing there. Well, when it flew off the nest, my horse got scared and he just turned a complete somersault. I hit my shoulder on an old stump. If it had been my head, I guess I'd still be there. So I got up and by that time Sam had caught up to me. My horse, Prince, just stood there - he wouldn't move after this happened. So Sam took his lines and led him up to the house and I walked up. I knew there was something wrong because my arm was hanging way down. Anyway, we got up to the house and found out MacDonald was out in the field hauling roots on an old stoneboat. Daphne was there looking after the kids and she sent Sam out to get George. So George came in and he was a kind of first aid man - he'd been in first aid during the war. George fixed me up the best he could - he put my arm in a sling, but he couldn't set it or anything. Then they loaded me up on the stoneboat and hauled me into town. Course I was all dirt and everything so Mother got busy and cleaned me up a bit.

The only way we could get to Spirit River that day was on the hand car that the section crew had. So they took me down to the station and laid this mattress on the hand car and put me on the mattress and started out for Spirit. There was Delbert Wells and Dan and Andrew Ramsfield. They had to pump the handles all the way. The mattress was sitting kind of high and everytime that handlebar would come down it almost grazed my nose. When we got up as far as Manir, there was another section gang up there and they decided to speed things up a bit so they hooked the old hand car behind the speeder. Boy, did we ever take a ride. All the time this speeder was pulling the hand car, the handles on the darn thing were still going like crazy and I was laying there with this darn handle just about banging me on the nose every second. Well, by the time we got to Spirit River, I was just about out of it. The took me into this doctor's office, old Doctor Maims. He was an old army doctor, drunk most of the time. Well, he finally comes in there and they put me into this little waiting room and he comes in and grabs ahold of my arm and puts his foot on my chest and then



Art and Dora Tansem's Wedding Dance - 1945. Singing: Vera and Ida Tansem. Front Row: Dorothea Fowler, Clarence and Laura Lampert.

gives my arm a big yank. Well, you could hear the darn thing snap back into place and I guess he did a good enough job but at first I thought he was going to pull my arm off. Then he put me in the hospital. I was in there for 2 weeks. I was about sixteen or seventeen then and by that time I'd been smoking a bit. This nurse came in and asked me, "Do you smoke at all?" and I, like a darn fool, says, "No." Well, they knew I was lying because they found my tobacco and old corn cob pipe in my pockets.

NEVER THOUGHT

Speaking of runaways, I remember the time I hauled a seed cleaner out to Funk's. Dave Moore was in the elevator down here at the time and he'd borrowed this cleaner from Funk and brought it in here to clean up some grain. Well, I guess Funk decided he wanted the thing back so Dave came up here and hired me to haul it back. I had a little black team then and I went down there and loaded this thing on a kind of a flat rack I had on my sleigh at the time. I drove out to Funk's. It didn't take me long to get out there because my team was feeling pretty good. They trotted all the way out there, up hill and down. So we got out there and Funk showed me where he wanted the cleaner and I don't know what really happened. This one horse, Dick, (Queen and Dick were the horses names) got rubbing his neck on the yoke and pulled his bridle off - busted the chin strap or something. Well, I had no control of that team then and all of a sudden they just took off. When they went around the gate, while they were turning the corner, they tipped the rack and, of course, I went with it. There was an old saw outfit standing there, one of those old buzz saws, and I just missed that thing.

Well, I couldn't do anything but just let that darn team go and they really went haywire. There was a fence around this straw pile and as the horses were going by, the sleigh caught the wire. Well, that team just kept going around that darn straw pile and they ripped all the wire off that fence and tore up a bunch of fence posts. They just really wrecked the place. Finally they had to stop because they were all hooked up and couldn't go any farther. After it was all over old Funk came out and asked me, "What did you jump off for?"

When I lived out south on the homestead, Cyril Harrington used to come out and stay with me once in a while. I was batching at the time and Cyril liked to drive horses and stuff and he spent quite a bit of time out there. I had two teams of horses then and this one time Hans Mortensen and Charlie Geller had been out there and threshed for me. Well, Hans had left his wagon and grain box there so I thought I should haul some grain into town while I had this extra wagon there. So Cyril and I loaded up and got ready to go but Cyril decided he wanted to drive this little black team. Well, I finally let him take it but I warned him to be careful because that team was nothing to fool with. "Oh, I can handle them alright," Cyril said.

Well, we made it as far as the top of the hill up here south of town and I don't know just what happened but I was coming behind Cyril and all of a sudden the team was out of sight. Cyril had jumped off at the corner and when I caught up to him, I asked what had happened. He didn't seem to know so we just went on into town to look for the team. Well, we looked all over for those horses and it was dark by the time we found them behind an old barn that used to be by Prevost's down here. It just happened that the team had been pulling Han's wagon and what stopped them was they'd caught the center pole in the ground and it was dug in about two feet. The wagon was fine and they hadn't spilled much grain but that runaway finished Cyril. I don't think he ever came back out to stay with me again.

EATING PUDDING

When they first cut that road out south - I worked on that road from this side - it was about 1919, I guess, about the time that south area was settled by men who returned from the war. Anyway, there was a crew of men that worked on the road from the south side and I worked on the crew from the north side and we were supposed to meet. We just cut a trail through there, really, just enough so you could get through with a team and sleigh. The stumps were cut pretty low but you sure bounced over them all the time.

Well, after this road was completed they put on a dance at McLean's place, they had about the biggest house out there, the best place for the dance. So we decided we were going to go out to that dance - Mother, Vera, Daphne and Sam Ramsfield, I forget who all.

I had this old team - Prince, the one that broke my collar bone, and King - hitched onto the sleigh and I'd borrowed a wagon box from old Jack Garrett. Old Jack used to come into town with his broncos, he called them. They were no more broncos than I am but, he'd stop them and then he'd slam his brake on so they'd stay there. This wagon box I borrowed from his was an old mountain wagon with a brake on the side. The wagon box sat kinda high and the spring seats were real high. Mother and the others were curled up in the back with blankets and stuff and I was sitting up on this seat, way up in the air.

Well, we got out there to Kadot and it was nothing like

it is now, the road just went straight down. I stopped at the top of the hill and I figured it looked pretty steep but I figured I could make it. I guess you had to roughlock it down the hill but I didn't know it so we just started out. About halfway down everybody started to jump out because they were so scared. Mother was the only one who stayed with me - the rest were scattered all the way down the hill, blankets strewn all around and everything. Well, that sleigh outfit just about ran over the horses, it was that steep, but we finally made it to the bottom and then had to wait for all the others to catch up. So, we got everybody loaded up again and settled down and Mother says, "I hope there's no more hills to go down". I laughed and said, "No, but there's one to go up so you better hang on".

Well, we made it up that hill and we were supposed to stop at Meadus' for supper. Those Meadus' were darn nice people. We put the team in the barn and fed them for the night. Meadus was going to take us up to the dance with his team. He was always real proud of his horses. Well, we got the horses put up and went into the house for Mrs. Meadus had a real good supper fixed up for us. But, I remember when it came time for dessert, she'd made tapioca pudding. Well, Vera liked sweets and she got her spoon already to start eating. But, when she lifted her spoon to her mouth the whole dish of pudding went along with it. Of course, the whole darn works of us started to giggle right away and Mr. Meadus, he was kind of a joker anyway, says, "Mother, I don't think you cooked that pudding long enough. Either that or you cooked it too long."

Well, we started out to the dance later. I was kinda sweet on Margaret and Jessie McLean at that time and the two of them danced the highland fling for the bunch of us. It turned out to be a real good dance - we all had a good time.

PIE EATING

We used to have a lot of dances up here in those days and I was usually playing for them. I had this dog called Jumbo who used to go along with me to just about all the dances I played at. I remember at this one box social I bid on Miss Reed's (she was a school teacher) box and bought it for about \$14.00. I didn't know it was hers at the time but I found out later. People used to pay \$40 or more for a box lunch at those socials. Anyway, I went to pay for this thing and I set it down on the floor while I got out my wallet. Just then old Jumbo came along - he was always walking around the hall looking for a handout - and he stuck his nose in this box and started to lick at the pie. Somebody came along and gave him a kick and he took off. But, that's when I found out whose pie it was. That Miss Reed was kinda mad about the whole thing. We still ate the pie though, the dog hadn't hurt it none.

EATING SAWDUST

The best box social trick I remember was one they had at the Steele School down by Belloy. There was a sawmill working south of Belloy and the cooks at the mill got

APRIL 22, 1937



The sawmill south of Belloy.

together and fixed up a real nice house for the social. They filled it up with buns and pie and donuts but all the things were made out of sawdust. The cooks told all the workers what they had done so they wouldn't bid on the darn thing. Well, come suppertime when they were selling the goods, everybody was bidding on this nice looking box. The cook right from the mill, he was kind of the head guy there, he got pretty looped and I don't know if he forgot or what but he ended up buying this box full of sawdust goodies. He paid 35 or 40 bucks for the thing. I don't know if he did it on purpose or it just all of the sudden dawned on him what he'd bought, but he took it over and set it down on the bench. The guys sitting on this bench were a bunch of darn skinflints - none of them would buy a box if they were starving. Well, this old guy, he sets this box down on the bench and says, "Any of you guys that are hungry help yourselves". So all these guys they just dig right in and start eating this stuff. Pretty soon they were spitting it out and throwing the stuff under the benches.

There was an old woman living around there who used to come to these socials with a big flour bag. When the dance was over, she'd go around picking up all the left overs and take them home. Well, she just cleaned everything out of that fancy box and took it home. I can see the look on her son's face when he dug into this stuff. Bet he got quite a surprise.

25¢ PLEASE

When I was ten years old, my Aunt Edna gave me a set of drums and that's when we started our band. We used to play for a lot of dances around here. There was Mother on the mandolin - one of those round-backed mandolins - and Dad on the violin and me on the drums. Once in a while Uncle Louis would come along with his violin. We played for dances in Prestville and Rycroft too. I remember once when Lawrence Leriger took us to Rycroft to play. He took us up in his sleigh one afternoon. We played that night and came home the next day. But, these drums sort of backfired on Aunt Edna. I used to like to practice a lot and it got to where she couldn't stand the noise. So after having bought the drums in the first place it got to where she was paying me a quarter every now and then so I would quit playing.

WANHAM DISTRICT MAN BARELY ESCAPES DEATH WHEN BULLETS CRASH THROUGH WINDOW

A shooting affair, believed by some to be the result of another case of the eternal triangle, occurred about a mile straight west of the Wanham station on Monday night, April 19, about 9:30.

Mike Chechko was eating his supper in Mike Baron's shack when a bullet crashed through the window, missing his head by a fraction of an inch. He sprang to his feet grabbed a rifle which was hanging on the wall and rushed to the window. He had no sooner done this when another shot was fired, the bullet striking him on the jaw. Fortunately, the bullet first struck the frame of the window, which broke its force.

The Mounted Police Station at Spirit River was gotten in touch with and in a short time Constable Lynes was on the scene and arrested Barons as a suspect.

Chechko was taken to the Spirit River Hospital, where an examination revealed that he was not seriously injured.

The accused and Chechko had been fast friends for at least five years.



The Mike Baron Shack.

HIGHLY RESPECTED CITIZEN PASSES

Mr. John Noreen of Heart Valley passed away Sunday, July 21, after an illness of about one month. Another stroke on Sunday was the cause of his death.

Mr. Noreen leaves to mourn his loss two daughters and four sons.

The respect in which Mr. Norine was held was shown by the large crowd of friends who attended the funeral at Heart Valley Church, and also by the numerous floral tributes.

Rev. Mr. Mitchell of Spirit River officiated, assisted by Mr. Lister of Wanham.

WANTED ESKIMO ELUDES MOUNTIES FIVE YEARS

Redcoats Search Barrens Relentlessly for Missing Telaruk, Thought to Have Murdered Jean Olson and Emil Bode in Their Trappers' Cabin on Upper Thelon River.

The mystery murder of the Barren Lands which made the outside world shudder, five years ago, remains unsolved. The slayer of Jean Olson and Emil Bode, trappers on the upper Thelon river, has never been brought to justice, though detachments of Royal Canadian Mounted Police carry descriptions of a wanted Eskimo, Telaruk, to whom the arrows of evidence point.

The vast wilderness, charted only along the main watercourses, which

reaches from Hudson Bay to Bering Sea, and from parallel 60 to the Arctic Islands, is the hideout where "Mountie" mushers must seek their suspect.

Though somewhat blurred in the memories of men of "the outside," to whom the reports were carried by Indian runner, radiotelegraph and the daily papers, the story is still fresh in the minds of those men of the north most closely associated with the grim discovery.

In Edmonton, after a winter's trapping, they told the story again. The men are Howard Price, A. J. Knox and Evan Peterson, trappers who flew up from Fort Resolution this spring.

Howard Price, who first came upon the bodies of Olson and Bode, when they had been dead nearly a year, recounted his part.

Dogs Go Wild

"I went out early in September, 1931, to trap the upper Thelon. I went in with John McKay, but built my cabin 12 miles farther north than his. I was four miles above Olson and Bode's cabin. I knew they had been there the year before, but I didn't think of them being there then.

"When I was building my cabin a couple of dogs came around and I recognized one as a dog they had bought in Fitzgerald the year before, so I went down to see if they were there.

"When I arrived at their cabin I found the bones of two dogs which had starved to death on the ends of their chains. The pair that came around my cabin must have broken loose. There was another that had gone wild and would not come close.

"The bodies of Olson and Bode were inside, both covered up. They must have been killed by somebody. Bode's diary was on the table and its last entry was dated

December 4, 1930. The last entry but two or three was: 'We found Telaruk today.' That is the name of the Eskimo who is suspected of killing them. He had worked for A. J. Knox, the musk-ox warden, and Evan Peterson saw him in the spring of 1931.

"The police arrived February 10 and Inspector Gagnon held an inquest. We gave the men a funeral. We couldn't dig in the frozen ground, but we built a log tomb. It is there yet and nothing can touch the bodies."

Knox Knew Him

Trapper Knox, whose crisp north Irish accent is still strong, though he has roamed the Barrens for 20 years, told of Telaruk, as he had known him. Knox started to take the Husky home to Baker lake from the Thelon game sanctuary.

"We started out but three of our dogs died of distemper and we had to come back to Artillery lake. On the way back we met an Eskimo travelling with three young women. Telaruk took quite a shine to one of them and kept talking about her after we left them.

"When we got back to Artillery lake, we started cutting logs to build my warden's cabin. I guess the work was too hard for the young Husky and he was thinking about the Husky girl. He wanted to go back and marry her.

"Bode dropped in and stayed with me for a few days in May and one day the Husky cleared out and left us. Bode left the next day for his trap line on the upper Thelon, 95 miles east. I only know what I was told about what happened after that because that year I went out on leave and took a trip to Ireland."

Evan Peterson, lean-jawed Norwegian, whose evidence materially aided the inquest, told he saw Telaruk, or an Eskimo who answered his description, in March, 1931.

"I was coming back from the Thelon and heading for Fitzgerald when I came across his camp. I stopped to talk with him for a short while and he knew a little English. I didn't know anything about the murder then.

"He had a .30-06 rifle with him. I noticed, and Olson and Bode were said to have had one like it.

"I never saw him again, though, and nobody knows where he is."



Emil Bode's Cabin at Wanham where he lived prior to moving to the Northwest Territories. Nels Jacobsen and Lusco Christensen.



The cabin of Emil Bode and Jean Olson on the Upper Thelon River, N.W.T., where they were both slain.



Emil Bode and Jean Olson with some of their pelts.



Cavalcade to Dunvegan to bid Martin and Alice Bode farewell on their trip by boat from Dunvegan to Yellowknife, N.W.T.



Martin Bode (brother of Emil) in front of his cabin.

SERIOUS ACCIDENT

While driving over the Burnt Hills on his way to Roycroft, O.L. Toftner narrowly escaped with his life.

Driving a Ford truck and trying to pass another car, Mr. Toftner's truck slipped over the edge and rolled over twice and landed on its wheels again, Mr. Toftner sustaining a broken leg. The occupant of the other car evidently did not notice what happened and proceeded on up the hill.

Mr. Toftner crawled out of the truck and onto the road where Mr. Lambert of the Massey-Harris Company picked him up and rushed him to the hospital.

As this hill is in the Spirit River Municipality, it is thought to be up to that municipality to have the road

fixed, as it is said to be one of the worst hills in the country and there is no room for cars to pass. Besides it is claimed that the hill is in very bad shape.

The Wanham Board of Trade called the municipality's attention to the condition of the hill and they promised to fix it up but so far have not done so.

Mr. Toftner returned from the hospital and the latest reports say he is progressing as well as can be expected.



Frank Carpenter and his brother Bill - ready for the hunt.



Frank Carpenter with his moving picture machine. He would travel around to show these moving pictures.

FRANK CARPENTER

by Wallace Tansem

NO HELP CAME

Frank Carpenter was a rather large man. His laugh suited his frame, for it was a hearty laugh. To hear Frank laugh was to know that he enjoyed life. And enjoy it he did. He attended the box-socials and dances that were held in various places in the Belloy-Wanham communities and even called in the neighbors for a shindig in his own cabin.

Frank arrived in the Peace River country along with Jim Bankhead, an uncle of Chris Bankhead, and landed first in the Berwyn area. In 1915, along with Pres Bankhead and his family, Frank came to the south side of

the river. He settled in the Wanham-Belloy District homesteading the S.E. 1/4 30-77-2-W6th, and here built his cabin and spent the remainder of his life. The first cabin he built was to burn down in about 1925. The second one was built and is the cabin standing today, a vanishing reminder of this early pioneer of the district.

In 1917, Frank, along with many of the other early stalwarts in the country, helped in cutting the roadway to McCrimmons Mill site. This sawmill must surely be counted as the major godsend to the settlers in our district. It was a tremendous boon to the pioneers for it provided many of them with work to subsist. It gave them floors for their cabins and roofs that didn't leak and the many other comforts that lumber brings. Except for a few shavings, nothing remains of this mill which was located approximately a mile south and east of the Stanley Karpinski home. It was here that Frank worked as a loader along with Sam Rouleau from 1917 to 1923.

In 1927 what was feared by many of the early people happened to Frank. He was cutting wood for the night's supply when suddenly the axe glanced sideways cutting the knuckle from his left ankle. It was a vicious cut and bled freely. He knew he would be unable to walk the near mile to the Bankheads, his neighbors, and so painfully he made for his cabin. Taking his rifle from its place on the wall, the shells from the table, he dragged himself to the door. He knew he must get help and so he raised the rifle to the sky and shot. The blast echoed in the cabin and rolled down the valley. Spent shell after shell rattled to the floor as he continued to shoot. Finally there was silence as the ammunition ran out. Extremely weak now, Frank made his way to the bunk and there he waited.

At the Bankhead cabin every shot was heard as it spewed from Frank's gun. Heads turned to the southwest. They listened as the booms thundered and filled the air, but shooting was common and heard quite often in the bush that filled the valley. Probably some settler after a new supply of meat. Maybe a party going on and the boys a little trigger happy. So they went about their work.

Later, Pres Bankhead decided to take a trip to Spirit River by horseback and being the typical neighbor made it a point to call on Frank to see if he was in need of anything. And Frank was in need. He was in bed and in extremely poor condition. Pres knew that his friend had to get to the hospital and so he returned home for the wagon and team. It fell to Chris Bankhead to make the long bone jarring trip with Frank to the hospital in Spirit and medical attention.

On the trip, Chris heard the reason for the volley of shots that had been fired in a futile attempt to bring help and it was then that an agreement was made that should trouble ever come again, the distress signal would be three shots in quick succession followed by silence then three more fast shots. This pattern would mean help was needed.

Frank recovered and returned to his cabin and his solitary life. It would seem that he developed an interest in village affairs for in the minutes of the Wanham Board of Trade dated November 23, 1933, we read. "At a meeting held in the poolroom, nine members of the Board of Trade were present including three new members: Mr. Al Fortier, Mr. Art Ramsfield, Mr. Frank

Carpenter." Many remember Frank at the local pool hall and the tremendous amount of body English he put into each shot and his laugh was a joy to hear. It was from the poolroom that Frank left late in the evening to walk home. With his pack of groceries on his back, he said his goodnight.

Two days later Emil Bush arrived at the small cabin. He was on his way by team to the hills south of Frank's to get a load of firewood. He had brought along a sack of potatoes to give to the neighbor from the Bushes. A knock on the door brought no response. Thinking that Frank might be away, Emil opened the door to set the potatoes inside. Frank lay dead in the cabin.

Bill Posty was notified and along the way he stopped to pick up Chris Bankhead. The two men went to the cabin to ascertain if the report was correct. The police were notified and during the investigation into the cause of death, three empty shells were found near the door. Three empty shells that told their story. A reminder to Chris of an agreement made so many years before. The signal of distress. For sometime during the day or night Frank had known he was in need of help. In desperation three shots had broken the stillness. For the second time the valley echoed with his call for help. This time the neighbors did not hear. No help came.

Frank was buried in the Wanham-Belloy Cemetery on March 24, 1948. A rather strange ending and one that has not yet been explained or finalized is connected with Frank. In the year 1925, while Chris Bankhead and Frank were making ties at Codesa, a letter was received by Frank. This letter advised him that he was one of the heirs of what was known as the Edward's Estate, an estate valued in millions.

So here we leave another story of a cabin and its master. Another story of one of our early settlers and the part he played in the life of our valley. The man is gone but the cabin remains, a reminder of his life. And sometimes in the evening a lone shot is heard reverberating in the distance and we listen for the two *quick ones* to follow.

AUGUST 3, 1939

OLD-TIME FIDDLERS' CONTEST AT WANHAM A BIG SUCCESS

The old-time fiddlers' contest put on by the Wanham Community Hall and Sports Association was more of a success than even the most optimistic member of the committee in charge had expected.

The following entrants competed for the honor of being the best fiddler of the day: E.H. Prevost, Wanham; L.C. Tansem, Eaglesham; Michael Bzowy, Rycroft; Bun Fortier, Belloy; Bud Metz, Wanham; St. Pierre Ferguson, Belloy; P. Tansem, Wanham; L. Metz, Wanham; Ross Archibald, Belloy; Rueben Metz, Wanham; Bud Rutherford, Prestville; L.W. Hoeght, Wanham; H. Ferguson, White Mountain; Leo Fowler, Wanham; Fred Williams, Spirit River; Alex Woronuk, Rycroft; Palmer Larson, Fox Creek.

Six others who entered were unable to be present for various reasons.

The following acted as judges: Wm Trumpower, Wanham; Fred Murphy, Wanham; M. Jasbec, Belloy.

The entire program was broadcast over short wave radio through the facilities of the Radio Station CFGP with their portable transmitter and rebroadcast over CFGP on their regular wave length.

It is many a day since the oldtimers enjoyed themselves as they did here last Friday night. They turned out from near and far to have a good time and certainly showed their appreciation of the efforts of the contestants.

The judges had the hardest part of the whole program in picking the winners, and while they were reaching a decision, all the contestants, under the direction of Ross Archibald from Belloy, treated the audience to some real old-time orchestra music, and they certainly showed that it was appreciated by calling for more.

The winners of the contest were: First prize, \$5, Alex Woronuk, Rycroft; Second prize, \$3, Pete Tansem, Wanham; Third prize, \$2, L.C. Tansem, Eaglesham.

After the contest everyone enjoyed the dance with their favorite contestant playing their request. It was the largest turnout for a dance that has ever been seen in the local hall and if the association had not just enlarged the hall it would have been impossible to take care of the crowd. Dancing continued until 5 am with, we hope, everyone satisfied and voting it the best ever had at Wanham.

LOOKING BACK - PEORIA

by Elaine Dick

Remember when community picnics were held at Central Hall?

Horse pulling is becoming popular in the 1980's but it really isn't new. Mr. Bill Davis went to a horse pulling contest in Grande Prairie in 1928.

Remember when Russell Bell was separator man for Wilbur Sterling? Russell came here from Ontario about 1929.

Remember a man called Wineski who homesteaded the Alan Graham place? Alan Graham later donated a parcel of that quarter for the Peoria public school.

From the Northern Tribune - November 8, 1934:

"Since the middle of September we have not had one week of good weather."

"The roads to town are in poor shape these days and for the past six weeks it has been almost impossible to take a load of wheat in to the elevator but with groceries needed, some are forced to make the trip."

Northern Tribune - October 11, 1934:

"On Monday, September 24, the members of the Peoria Church gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Rottacker to bid their beloved paster, P.A. Rick and family, a fond farewell, as they leave for their new field of labor in Edmonton."

Northern Tribune - July 12, 1934:

"A farewell party was given the school teacher, Miss Eggert. She will leave Tuesday for the south, going by car. Willy Moritz and Fred Sulzle are also going."

February 1, 1934:

"An up-to-date circular saw (newest in style) has been



*Left to Right:
Anton Kozak,
Albert Davis,
Ruben Seibel and
Harry Davis.*

made by Dan Reiswig and it works real good."

"Mr. A. Rogars and company of Wanham are going around with a shingle-cutting machine doing work for farmers."

April 20, 1933:

"The first fire in Peoria for over four years consumed Mr. Sather's log barn on Sunday morning. Some feed was lost also. The cause of the fire is unknown."

"George Reiswig shipped a carload of cattle last week. He made \$76 by going to Edmonton with his cattle. He got \$31 a piece for some of his herd."

"The Rottacker - Reiswig sawmill started on Monday, April 9. Although the run will not be nearly as long as last spring, yet it will be longer than they figured on."

February 22, 1934:

"Fred Reiswig moved into his new house today. All who built new houses lately have moved into them, except Phillip Siebel."

March 1, 1934:

"Mr. D. Yanke narrowly missed being seriously injured when a tree fell upon him."

"Mr. and Mrs. Jack Redgrove visited in Peoria during the week. Mr. Redgrove brought some green feed from his dad."

December 14, 1933:

"A. Warner had the misfortune to upset his caboose when it was full of passengers. With the exception of suffering a few slight burns from the stove, all the passengers were uninjured."

May 21, 1932:

"Mr. and Mrs. Phil Seibel and family have lost their home by fire and we all feel sorry for them."

"Another bad fire was one on the Kaduct place which destroyed about 150 bushels of L. Olson's oats and his granary too."

"Across the creek, Mr. Smith lost his barn."

November 30, 1933:

"Mr. Wendland is very proud of his son, but who wouldn't be."

June 15, 1933:

"The people of Wanham and district who were fortunate enough to be out and heard George's "Melo-Melotones" this evening in the Wanham hall were unanimous in saying it was the best concert or entertainment ever put on in the local hall.

The program consisted of vocal solos, duets, trios,

quartettes and choruses as well as piano and guitar solos which, with several readings, completed the entertainment, which lasted close to two hours.

It is hard to pick any of the company for special mention, all being very good, but Miss Emma Ziprick in her readings and Mr. Delmar Reiswig in his solos, for which he played his own guitar accompaniment, certainly went over big with the crowd.

The "Melo-Melotones" leave this week on a tour of the Peace River District."

Grande Prairie Northern Tribune - March 19, 1936:

"Mr. and Mrs. Taylor sprang a surprise on the entire community when they brought a baby girl to church. The young lady is only three months old and arrived by Tuesdays train from the Children's Home in Edmonton. This makes about 8 adopted children in Peoria."

March 4, 1937:

"Emil Janot returned from Calgary last week but not alone - he brought back a bride. "Congratulations Emil."



*Mr. and Mrs.
Richard Johnson and
Johnny.*



*Dea and Edith
Moore - early settlers
west of Wanham.*

THE GUN THAT WOULDN'T SHOOT STRAIGHT

by Jim Howard

Dad, Sam Rouleau and Cecil Bice worked together for many years on the section. They shared many experiences together, some good and some not so good.

One such incident really sticks in my mind. Cecil Bice had an old Mouser rifle with a loose barrel - it wouldn't

WANHAM

a P.O. and station on the E. D. & B. C. Ry., on S3 T78 R3 W6, in Peace River Prov. Elec. Div., 22 miles east of Spirit River, the nearest telegraph office and business centre. Has long distance telephone, Presbyterian and Anglican churches and public school. Mixed farming, lumbering and stock-raising. Improved land averages \$30 per acre, unimproved \$15. Population 12, with 150 farmers in vicinity. Dwyer L. board and rooms McRae O. Presb minister Tausen C. C. Jeweler and watchmaker Tausen Peter gen store and F.M. Thompson J. Ang. clergyman Trompou R. blacksmith

From Wrigley's Alberta Directory - 1920.



J.N. Ferguson and children.



Mrs. George Johns with unknown baby.



Mrs. Ferguson and family.



Left to Right: Unknown, Dick Wells and Gordon Sheedy. These men travelled by raft to Yellowknife, N.W.T.



A grain box on a local farm.



Building a bridge - Nels Jacobsen.



First car to Peoria in summer.



Building the road south - 1928.



On the road south of Wanham.

Dated July, 25 A.D. 1930

E. Fortner

TO

Fred Nelson

Farm Lease

For 1 years from July 25 '30
at 25.00 yearly rent

THE WILLSON STATIONERY CO., LTD.



Fred Nelson doing his high wire act - on the ferry cables across the Peace River at Dunvegan.

hit anything. Dad and Cecil spent a whole day (the day before the incident I'm going to tell you about) trying to make the thing shoot straight. No dice! It just wouldn't shoot where it was supposed to.

The next morning Sam, Cecil and Dad were going to work out near Codesa on their handcar. Cecil had brought his gun along hoping to work on it during their lunch hour. Suddenly they spotted a big bull moose about to cross the tracks in front of them. They stopped their handcar and Cecil took aim. Bang! Then miracle of miracles, the moose fell - right across the tracks! It was at about the same instant that one of them looked down the track to see two lights shining in the distance. The passenger train was only about a mile or so off!

Throwing the handcar off the track, they raced to their dead moose. No three men ever worked harder than they did to get that huge moose off the track before the train got there. They managed it just in time. The engineer gestured as he went by, a gesture, they realized, that wasn't exactly friendly.



Ralph Wells and the D. Moore twins.



Pioneer Homesite - note the sod shack.

Above the souging of a chinook came the shout of a man, "Emils shot in the neck".

Art had been running a mile and a half on the wooded trail that led down hill from Bohnke's mill to where we were cutting and skidding logs.

Very much out of breath, he made it clear that his brother, Emil, who had been accidentally shot deep in the green woods, was down and bleeding badly. He needed help. My brothers, Bob, Tom, Dave and Buck went back up the trail to the mill which was not in operation at the time. They spent the afternoon cutting a trail to the wounded man and leading a horse hitched to the tongue of a sleigh with three boards nailed to the bunks to form a stretcher on which they could lay the suffering man.

I drove Art to the only dwelling in the open settlement which had a car in operation. The lady of the house informed us that John Kranzler was still in town but could be home soon. The sun was getting low by the time we met John and made arrangements for him to be waiting at the foot of the hill with his 1927 Chev. coach. By this time we had covered a great many miles by team and sleigh through the snow, though it was very thin in that winter of 37-38. We landed back at the mill just as the rescue party pulled in with Emil tied to the boards to keep him from rolling off on the newly cut trail.

Our patient was transferred from one sleigh to another and after reaching the clearing was placed upright in the back seat of the car.

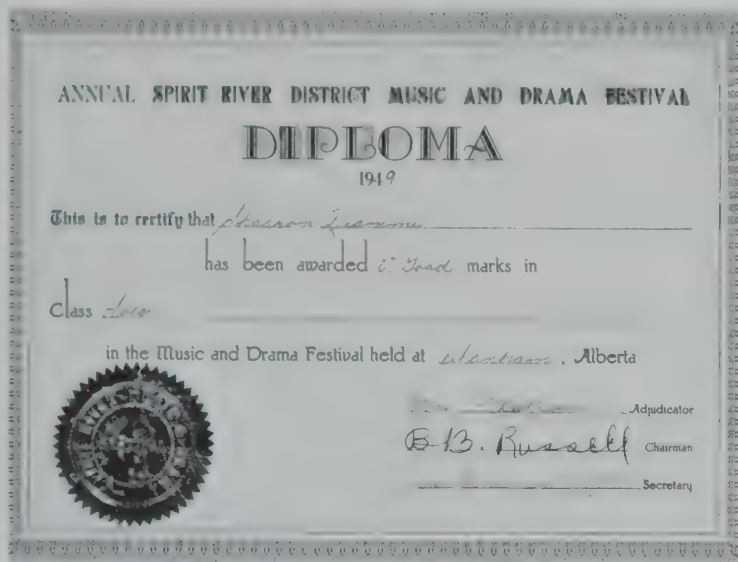
My brother Bob, who was the local pastor at the time, had helped to cut trail all afternoon, tucked Emil into the blankets in the car. He said a little prayer that all the tired little group could hear, gave him a kiss on his one good cheek and said "good-bye". John Kranzler headed his little car for Grande Prairie some 40 miles distant with the first twelve miles just a trail through the fire killed timber. The wind continued to roar and shriek in the tree tops and in the open some drifting was in evidence.

From Sexsmith to Grande Prairie the road was blocked with snow with no traffic getting through. It was necessary to stay in the hotel overnight and proceed to Grande Prairie in the morning when the road was opened up.

Dr. O'Brien who attended Emil declared that it was nothing short of a miracle that the man was alive at the time of his arrival at the hospital. The bullet from the 30-30 rifle had entered the face just where the molars meet and had passed between the jugular vein and the spinal column.

Emil lived to be a grey haired granddad. He carried a dimple in his cheek where the bullet entered and another in the back of his neck where it came out. He was indeed a very active man in all his remaining 37 years. He was a good friend and neighbor to all who knew him, so very skillful at the forge or with the torch, with steam and gas motors, always delighted to chat to those who called him in from the field to repair some broken piece of machinery. From the way he expressed himself he was very grateful for the help he had received at the time of his accident and the encouragement extended to him during his convalescence.

The men said when they reached the accident victim the snow was saturated with his blood. It took six hours of hard going to get him into the car. In all it took twenty hours before the man got medical help. "A miracle" - yes a miracle indeed, it could be an answer to prayer.



THE GRANDE PRAIRIE HERALD TRIBUNE

May 15, 1941

SOUTH SLOPE SCHOOL AT WANHAM DID WELL AT SPIRIT RIVER FESTIVAL

Those in charge of preparing the pupils of South Slope School for entry in the different classes at the Spirit River District Festival can well be proud of the results the entrants secured.

This is the second year that this school had entered the festival and last year was not so encouraging, as there was not one "First" came to the school. But this year the results are very gratifying and prove beyond doubt that music, dramatics and physical training have a place in the school and that a year's training can make a big difference. The following is a list of the winning classes:

Boys' Solo, Div. 3: 1st - Tom Cameron

Girls' Solo, High school: 1st - Kathelene Cameron
2nd - Ethel Metz

Boys' Solo, Div. 2: 3rd - Louis Wiegel

Girls' Solo, Div. 2: 3rd - Jean Harrington

Girls' Solo, Div. 3: 2nd - Betty Trump

Boys' Chorus: 1st

Two part Chorus: 2nd

Chorus, Div. 3, Two-part: 2nd

Elocution, Div. 1: 2nd - Bernice Wiegel

Elocution, Div. 3: 3rd - Wallace Tansem

Rhythmic Exercises, 10 years and under: 1st

Rhythmic Exercises, 11 years and under: 1st

Junior Dancing, 10 years and under: 1st

Senior Dancing, 11 years and over: 2nd

MARCH 12, 1942: The novelty dance to be held in Wanham Community Hall on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, gives promise of an hilarious time. With com-

mendable energy and initiative, Mrs. E.W. Trump and Mrs. Alex Sandercock are sponsoring this dance to raise funds for next season's proposed town rink. Such an early start in raising the initial expenditure is expedient, and the only assurance of early skating. All parents of children are wholeheartedly behind this community effort. The school children are selling tickets on a war savings certificate. The draw for this raffle will be made at the dance. A pair of skates goes to the lucky boy or girl who sells the most tickets. The music is being generously donated by local artists. The versatility of such musicians as Mrs. Morrison, Edward Prevost and Louis Hoeght is recognized. You may substantiate this by coming and dancing to their music. Leroy Tansem, Lloyd Fowler and Buddy Metz, well-known "Jungle Boys", have generously promised to contribute. As they play for most of the dances throughout this locality, the zest and gusto of their performance need no introduction. Skaters! Now is the time to join with the sponsors in giving the rink a boost.

JULY 2, 1942: A camp for boys and girls of nine years of age and over will be held from July 13 to July 20 near the bridge on the Burnt River, below the farm of Mr. Jack Stevens. It is under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church and will be conducted by Mr. and Mrs. A.R. Hancock of Wanham, assisted by Mr. Johnston of Blueberry Mountain. The fees are \$4 and no food or \$2 and the following articles of food: half pound sugar, one loaf of bread, two tins of salmon, two tins of tomatoes, pound of butter, two tins of pork and beans, two dozen eggs, one tin of fruit. For some of the canned goods, the equivalent in home-canned meat, fruit or vegetables may be substituted. Every camper must bring his own cup, saucer, plate, knife, fork, spoon, swim suit, bed roll, Bible and note book. The first meal is supper on July 13 and the last meal is at noon on July 20. All boys and girls over nine of the Wanham, Prestville, Blueberry and Gordondale Districts are welcome to attend camp.

Mr. A.R. Hancock will hold an open-air service at the Burnt River on Sunday, July 19, at 3 p.m. The regular services at Wanham, Prestville and Heart Valley will be cancelled on July 19, but all are cordially invited to attend the open-air service. Take a picnic lunch. Tea and coffee will be supplied.

The Young People's Club will be suspended during July but will hold meetings again in August, commencing the first Monday of the month.

AUGUST 8, 1946: A "Well Baby Clinic" for infants and pre-school children has been started in Wanham at L. Laughy's home, north of the Photo-Service, every Friday morning, 10 to 12 o'clock.

Public Health Services in the form of immunization from diphtheria, whooping cough, scarlet fever and small pox. Advice is given in any problems parents may have regarding habit, training, etc. of their children.

Parents who have children starting school in September are requested to see your Public Health Nurse soon.

Similar clinics will be held in Spirit River on Thursday afternoons and in Rycroft on Friday afternoons.

These services are offered by your school division.

NOVEMBER 30, 1950

JOY IN WANHAM, RYCROFT AS LIGHTS GO ON, RATES SKID

Making the start of a new era in the electrification of the Wanham and Rycroft Districts, the Board of Trade here staged a banquet Monday, a scant few hours after power had officially begun to flow into Wanham from an enlarged plant at Rycroft.

Over the weekend, the small power plant at Wanham had been dismantled, hoisted on trucks, and consolidated with the Rycroft plant, 14 miles away. Power began pulsing along a new 14 1/2 mile transmission line from the Rycroft plant to Wanham.

So smoothly did the round-the-clock dismantling and switchover job go that Wanham was without power for only one minute.

E.J. Harrington, President of the Wanham Board of Trade, hailed the changeover as a "progressive step in the development of this area." Similar sentiments were expressed by A.O. Fimrite of Wanham, who sparked the move for the consolidated plant and the new power line.

Power generated at the enlarged Rycroft plant will now serve 140 consumers in Rycroft and more than 80 in the Wanham area.

Perhaps happiest about the whole thing were the pupils of Wanham public school which is hooked into the new line. Previously, the school, about half a mile from the main section of town, had been without power.

But there was general rejoicing among the customers. Consolidation of the two plants means that a healthy slice will be lopped off their monthly power bills.

On hand at the banquet were officials of Canadian Utilities Limited, which operates the enlarged Rycroft plant. Speaking briefly were Roy Nurse, superintendent of production for the company, Ernie Harrison, line foreman, and George O'Brien, general manager at Grande Prairie.

H.E. Howell, formerly of Grande Prairie, has been appointed supervisor of the Rycroft plant. George L. Ferraby, formerly of Rycroft, will be in charge of the power plant at Grande Prairie.

DECEMBER 7, 1950:

NEW POST OFFICE OPENED AT WANHAM

Touted as one of the most modern in the Peace Country, the new Wanham Post Office opened its doors for business Thursday, Nov. 30.

Completion of the building was a triumph for Postmaster John Hall who had sparked the movement for a new post office. Contractors were Erling Borseth and Arthur Tansem.

Getting used to the large amount of floor space and busily preparing for the Christmas rush are Postmaster Hall and his two assistants, Mrs. Nan Hall and Mrs. Mae Boetcher.

DECEMBER 20, 1951:

MRS. RUSSELL HEADS WANHAM PROGRESSIVE CLUB ELECTION

The Progressive Club held its December meeting at the home of Mrs. E. Hauser. Thirteen members were present. A new executive was elected as follows: President - Mrs. B.B. Russell, Vice-president - Mrs. Harrington, Secretary-treasurer - Mrs. B. Hauser.

A donation of three boxes of apples was given to the

school Christmas tree fund. A donation of \$10 was given to the newly formed Boys Scouts Association.

The usual Christmas party was held at the meeting. A good time was had by all members. The top prize winner was Mrs. Waters, and second was Mrs. Harrington. Mrs. Wiegel and Mrs. Russel gave a duet. This was followed by a sing-song which was closed by "Silent Night". Presents were then drawn. A delicious lunch was then served by Clara and her mother.

The next meeting was to be held at the home of Mrs. Waters.

WANHAM HOME AND SCHOOL NEWS

A meeting of the Wanham Home and School Association was held on Wednesday, December 12. Officers were elected for the coming year. There were as follows: President - Mrs. E. Prevost, Vice-president - Mrs. L. Lampert, Secretary-treasurer - Mrs. Fimrite.

A film, "Learning to Know Children," was shown. Mr. Russell prepared a series of questions and they were used as a basis for a very interesting discussion that followed the showing of the film. The meeting asked that the same procedure be followed at the next meeting.

Reports were presented by the Hall Committee and the Scouts Committee.

Musical numbers were given by Mr. Prevost and Mr. Olshanowski. The final item was a very tasty lunch provided by the ladies. There were about thirty five people present.

THE FIRE

by Dora Tansem

In the spring of 1950 Art and I, with our children, Maxine and Sharon, moved to the homestead. The log cabin Art had built during the winter was to be a temporary home. He had cut and hauled logs to Sather's Saw Mill to be cut into lumber to build our house that fall.

We had a team of horses, Jigs and Dempsey, 3 cows and a calf, 6 hogs and 25 chickens. A barn, chicken house and pig house and pen were built.

We were soon settled and very busy seeding and fencing the bush pasture for the cattle and horses. Art cleared and broke more land and the girls and I picked wild fruit for preserves, jams and jellies for the winter. The garden yielded abundantly and the crop was cut and the alfalfa stooked. The oats, which Stuart Bennett, the Pool elevator agent, surmised would run 100 bushels to the acre, was cut and stacked for threshing at some later date when the threshers were finished with their own crops.

There were many fires in the area. I was very worried about this as our farm was surrounded with heavy brush and undergrowth and large jack pine trees.

On Wednesday, September 20, we woke up to a beautiful fall day, clear sky and red-gold foliage on the trees touched by early frost. The girls had gone to school 3 1/2 miles from our place while Art and I were busy with various chores. A strong wind arose and filled the air

with heavy billowing smoke. Smouldering bark fell at our feet and as Art picked some up, it was very hot.

"I'm going for help. That's too close for comfort," said Art as we headed for the truck. "We better leave word at the school for the children. I'm sure my sister will keep them for a day or two," I said.

It was recess time and Maxine came to us when I called to her. She seemed very worried as someone had told her the fire had crossed the south road west of us. I told her and her sister to stay at Liz Hauser's in town for a few days.

We left word at the Pool Hall and Hotel of our need for help to fight the fire then returned home to find Stuart Bennett and Bob Sawers in the yard. They had noticed the fire had crossed the road from the look-out tower at the Pool Elevator.

"We better move the furniture out on the breaking in case the cabin catches fire. There is no water near by so we haven't got a chance to save the buildings or grain stacks," said Art. He let out the chickens and chased the pigs from the pen.

Art's brother Ray, and his wife Ida, came from the east across the breaking and stubble field. They had tried to come by our road but flaming bark, the 50 to 100 mile an hour wind was blowing across the road and through the air, made this impossible. It was a flaming inferno and no one could get through. They advised us to get out while we could.

As we all started east, Art cut the pasture fence wire to let the cattle out. Just then Wally Tansem and George McDonald arrived. They had come through the pasture. We used wet towels over our faces to keep from breathing the heavy billowing smoke, which stung our eyes, and to keep the heat from scorching our skin. The fire ranger was at the neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Nick Pisarchuk; he had enlisted the help of men from the Hotel and Pool Hall to fight the raging inferno. Cliff Tansem's caterpillar tractor was clearing a wide swath of trees and brush, but to no avail.

The onrush of falling, flaming trees, burning bark and debris, spread farther east. Clearing trees and brush and back-firing didn't help so the fire raged on and on.

Several men were rushed to the hospital in Spirit River for treatment of smoke inhalation.

Food was prepared by volunteers at the home of Delbert Wells near by, while the men worked tirelessly to keep the fire in check.

Four days passed and no rain or letup.

Sunday morning I woke up to the patter of rain drops on the roof of Ida and Ray's home where we were staying during the onslaught of raging fire. Then there was a very heavy downpour and it rained for several days. At last the fire was stopped and we moved our few belongings back to town.

The cattle and horses were singed. The pigs had gone back into the pighouse and were bloated and burned. The chickens were roasted on the roosts. The harness for the horses and the barn was burned. The stooks of alfalfa that had the most seed were burned as were the stacked oat bundles. Many household articles, and all clothing, were destroyed and this set us back in farming for many years.



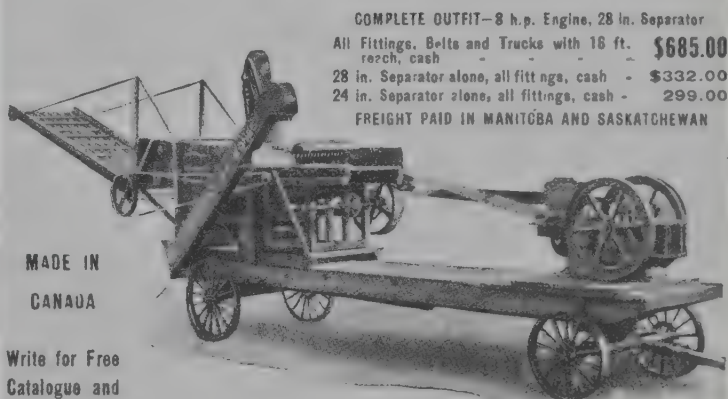
The Tansem log Cabin that burned Sept. 26, 1950. Maxine and Sharon Quamme on the step.

A. STANLEY JONES

NORTH BATTLEFORD, SASKATCHEWAN

General Sales Agents for La Compagnie Desjardins, Limited

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COMPLETE OUTFIT—8 h.p. Engine, 28 in. Separator
All Fittings, Belts and Trucks with 18 ft. - **\$685.00**
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Paul Gerlach, Allan, winner of the World's Prize Wheat in 1913.
W. S. Simpon, Pambrum, winner of the World's Prize Flax. See Prizes in my Catalogue.

John Illingworth, Roecliff, who came within $\frac{3}{4}$ point of Seager Wheeler in 1914
Also see the Official Government Report on my machine given by the Government Expert. All in my Catalogue.

Many Improvements. Kerosene Burner if desired.

My price for cash this year is only \$15.00 more than last and my time price is only 5% more. Other companies have advanced from 10% to 25%. You will notice I publish all my prices plainly in my advertising and my catalogue and do not have two or three different prices for the same article.

*With customers as above I am sure there is not much chance
about what you are buying.*

TRANSPORTATION



The Oxen. Many a pioneer came over the Edson and Grouard Trails with these trusty animals.



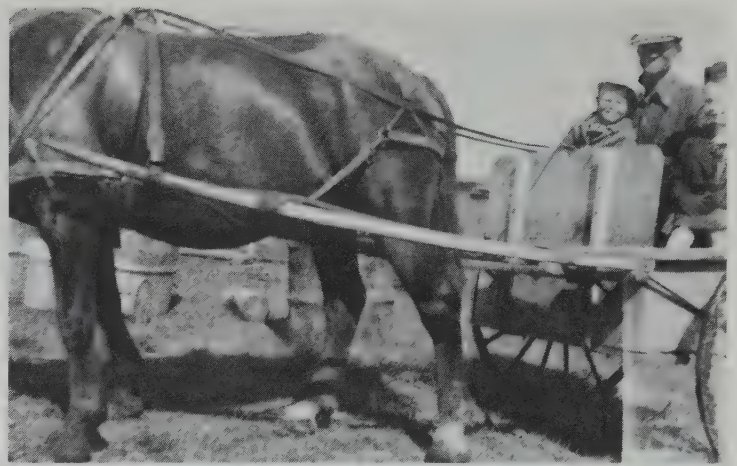
The dog team and sled - Joe-Prim Girard of Codesa selling fish.



Mrs. Koeppen with her saddle horse.



Saddle Horses on the banks of the Burnt River.



The Cart Drawn by One Horse in Shafts. Willie Noren with Johnny and Marcelle.



The Wide Wheeled Wagon. The Purdy and Howard Families.



Sleigh Bunks for the Winter. Mrs. Francis and children - 1934.



Bringing up the Last Load of Mail.



The Caboose - A Common Sight in the Peace River Country During Severe Winter Weather. Mr. and Mrs. Emil Gliege with Amanda, Edna and Alma.



Novel Means of Transportation - Carl Hansen on a "jigger".



Horses and Cutter.



The Brand New Bicycle - every small boy's dream. Fred Bennett on his new bike and Alice with her doll on the steps of Hughie Fraser's cabin. Hughie was road foreman in the Peoria and West Vale districts in the thirties.



Heavy Snows Made Travel Difficult for any Mode of Transportation. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bennett and Alice - April 5 - 1948.



Wheels at Last!

Below: The Model T. This one owned by Ken Botham. Note the crank ready for use.



Endeavouring to Clear the Snow - April 7 - 1948.





Chains! They were a necessity on local roads. Harry Moss had them on this truck.



The "Highway" to Peace River - 1938.



It's a Long Way to Peace River!

GRANDE PRAIRIE NORTHERN TRIBUNE - 1929 POOL ELEVATOR FINISHED

The Pool elevator is finished at this point and the crew left on Tuesday's train. Wanham now has two elevators and the farmers are well satisfied with the Pool's action in building at this point.

NEW RESTAURANT

Mr. and Mrs. R.R. Sawers arrived in town last week and have commenced work on a new restaurant, which

will be open in about two weeks. It will fill a long-felt want in Wanham, as visitors will now have a place to go for a meal. There will also be rooms upstairs.



Sometimes it Just Wasn't Worth It - Sitting down on the Job - Sverre Borseth and two gals.



This was Real Class - Jack Neys with his Plane.

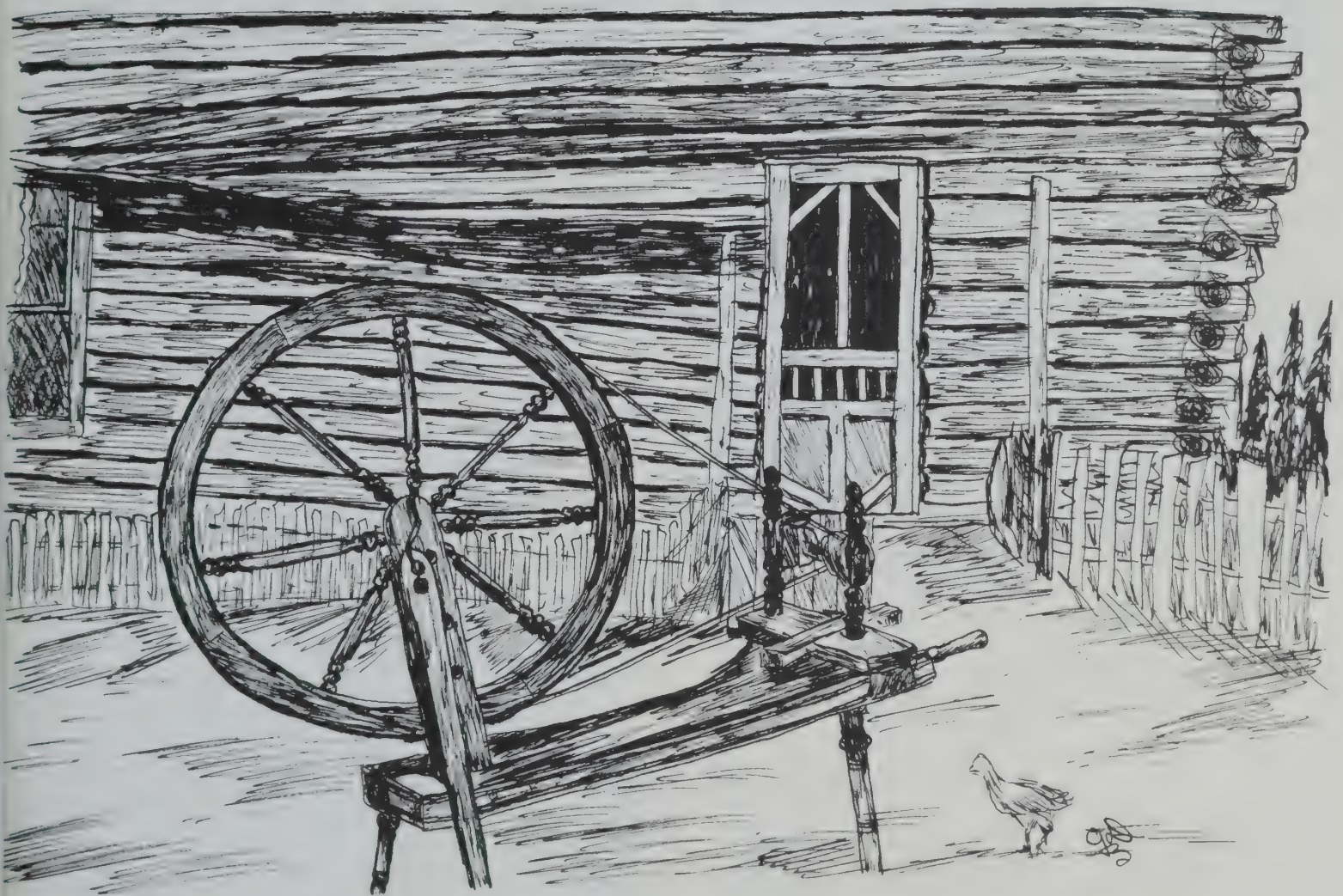
SEEN AND HEARD 1929

Mr. Al Fortier parking up against the Wanham Mercantile gas pumps.

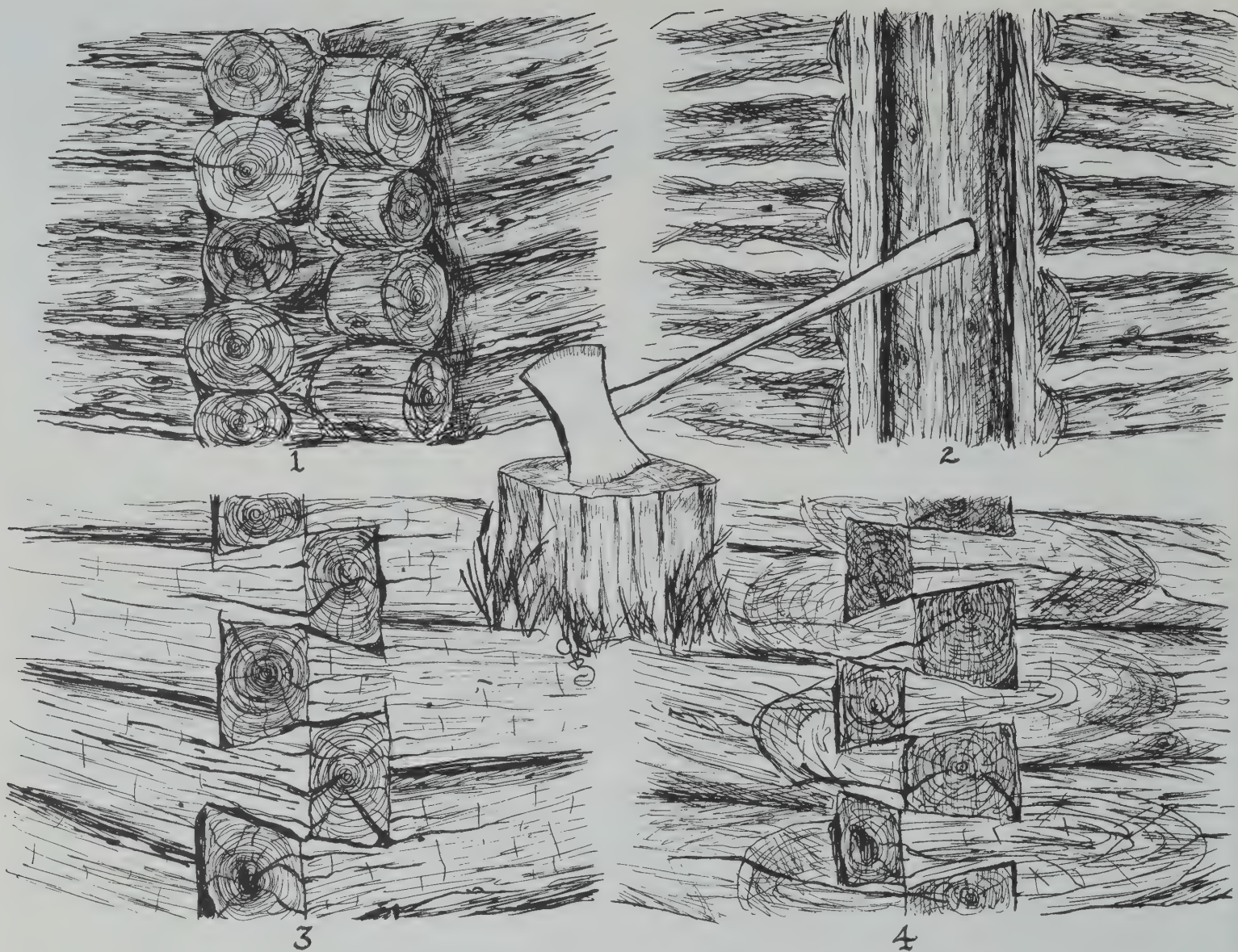


Emil Sather breaking land on his homestead in 1929. 3 year old Stanley standing on the plough with his Dad.

Pioneer Skills



Spinning Wheel



Cabin Corner Styles

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Crotch and Saddle | 2. Hudsons Bay |
| 3. Hand hewn and grooved
with dovetail corners. | 4. Dovetail corners with
rounded logs. |

The skill of the axemen and the pressure of time dictated the corner style of cabin building. The simple notched, the Hudson's Bay or the variations of the intricate dovetail were all evident in Wanham and area cabins.



Making use of their skills - Carl Erstad and a friend working on Carl's barn. Note the dovetailed corners on round logs.



The neighbours pitched in to help a pioneer complete his buildings. They called it a "barn raising". Carl Erstad's completed barn.



Paul Bunyan? Actually Nels Jacobsen log building.



If you didn't have shingles you had a sod roof - weathertight and practical. Note plants growing on roof. This is Richard Johnson's first cabin. Left to Right: Richard Johnson, Carl Erstad, probably Art Ramsfield, Art Tansem. Kneeling: Sam Ramsfield, Ray Tansem and Arnold Ramsfield.



The two-storey log cabin - this one was a work shop on Alex Dofher's farm. In the picture are Mr. Dofher Sr., Alex, his wife and two children.



A "house raising" crew at Rahab (Codesa) in the early days. Note heavy timber in background.



Sverre Borseth hauling logs to Rottacker's mill - 1930.

SOAP RECIPE EILEEN USED DURING THE WAR YEARS

by Eileen Parlee

To one can of lye, add 2 1/2 pints cold water in a crock. Stir until lye dissolves. Cool to not above 80 degrees F. Melt 4 lbs. salt-free grease - 120 degrees F., i.e. just warm to the hand. Lye at summer heat. Slowly pour dissolved lye into the grease. N.B. Stir until lye and grease are thoroughly combined and mixture drops from spoon like honey. Stir slowly, but not too long, as mixture may separate. Stirring may take from 5 to 10 minutes, according to grease and weather.

Pour into wooden box with cotton lining. Cover well. Set in a warm place for one or two days. Turn out and cut.

LAUNDRY, THE HARD WAY ...

by Lily G. Sather

"Blue Monday" can have very little meaning to the modern housewife with running water and automatic washer, but to the early pioneers it was very real indeed.

How depressing it must have been to see the dirty clothing mount up, piece by piece until the hamper was full to overflowing by Monday morning!

Contrary to the present day, much had to go on, well before the actual washing could take place. Tallow and grease had to be saved and rendered, and about twice during the year used to make soap for laundry. The housewife was always careful to keep a good supply on hand at all times.

In most cases the only soft water obtainable was the rain water which was gathered via homemade wooden eavestroughs attached to the roofs. In winter, melted snow served the purpose.

Every available container was utilized to store the water, so on washdays it was quite a chore to get a boiler and tub empty in which to begin the wash.

Washday always began early because the water had to be carried in with buckets and then heated in a wash boiler on top of the wood burning stove. Because the boiler was usually filled with water, this took quite some time.

While the water was heating the housewife prepared either a pot of salt pork and beans, a moose meat mulligan, or a vegetable casserole for a convenient noon meal.

The wash tub was placed on a home made bench. When the water was very hot it was poured into the tub until it was about half full. White clothing was laundered first and so a supply of these garments was pressed into the hot water. A wash board was placed at an angle in the tub and a bar of the home made laundry soap slipped into the section supplied for it.

A hand turning clothes wringer was attached to the opposite side of the tub. A second tub, half filled with hard water was set behind the wringer for rinsing. Because the water was hard, curdles formed and clung to the sides of the tub as the soap was removed from the



If you ain't got a clothes line handy you can use the bushes. Wash day on the farm. L. Leriger at the tub with visitors Roy Taylor and Walter Francis. July 1915.



Nels Jacobsen



Wash tub on a box. Washboard in place and a new fangdangled wringer. Don't take long to do the wash now. Lusco Christensen hard at it. Note the sharpening wheel for keeping the axes and tools in shape.



Clothes pins and baskets. Hanging out the wash. Irene Laughy on a typical wash day.

clothing. Blueing, which was in a solid form and enclosed in a piece of white cotton muslin, was swished briefly in the rinse water.

As the washing began, each item was drawn up onto the washboard, soap rubbed on it, and the housewife began rubbing it vigorously up and down on the corrugated metal board. A pushing, pulling and releasing motion was used until all of the garment was bunched up in the palm of the hand. Then it was tipped end for end, dipped again into the water and more soap added. The scrubbing process was repeated until all of the soil disappeared. Occasionally wash boards had breaks in the metal which could result in slashed fingers for the unwary.

Garments to be whitened were placed in a half filled boiler of water on the stove. Soap was shaved into this form from the bar. Water and clothing were brought to a boil and continued to boil for several minutes. Then using a smooth wooden stick, the items were removed to a dishpan, put through the wringer, and all allowed to fall into the rinse tub.

Every piece of dry clothing added to the wash tub deleted the water, so water from the boiled items was allowed to flow into the tub to replenish the supply. Fresh soft water was added to the boiler as needed.

Piece by piece throughout the forenoon the dirty clothing was made clean. At dinner time the housewife took a break, if serving dinner to a hungry family could be called a break! After a brief respite she was back at the wash board.

It took most of the afternoon to complete the colossal job. By that time the lady of the house was bathed in sweat, her hair hung in strings, her back ached and she was completely played out.

Drying the laundry too was quite a feat. Clothes were hung outside on galvanized wire lines. If the breeze was right and the sun shone, they dried quickly and came off soft, fresh and fluffy. But rain posed a problem. Then it was often a race with time to have clothing dry when needed. Lines around stove pipes and above the heater had to be utilized.

In winter fingers became stiff with the cold when hanging or removing the items from the line outside. Clothing looked and sounded like boards when they were taken in from the line. They practically stood up by themselves. Since they were only frozen and not dry, they still had to be hung on lines around the room.

Not having any of the modern fabrics in pioneer days, nearly everything had to be ironed. There were no steam irons, so every item had to be sprinkled with water before it could be ironed. Sad irons, rather aptly named, were heated on the wood burning stove. They were heavy, and a set consisted of three separate irons and one removable handle. To test if the iron was hot enough saliva was applied to a finger and the finger touched quickly to the bottom of the iron. If it was hot enough the moisture would spit and sputter, and the housewife would begin.

The handle was clipped onto one of the irons, which was then taken to the ironing board. When it cooled it was exchanged for a hot one.

Summer and winter the stove had to be rather steadily fired to keep the sad irons hot. This was fine in winter

when heat was needed to warm the house, but in summer the added heat was something else again.

One can hardly help admiring the pluck of these pioneer ladies. They were a hardy lot indeed, and even today - despite the "Blue Mondays" of yesteryear, you often hear them wishing for 'the good old days!'



Getting in the winter's hay. An every summer job of mowing. Elmer Bodette on the seat.



After mowing and raking - hauling and stacking. Henry Kent with his one horse hay rack. Mona (Howard) and Ben on the horse. Note rail fence and crosscut saw.



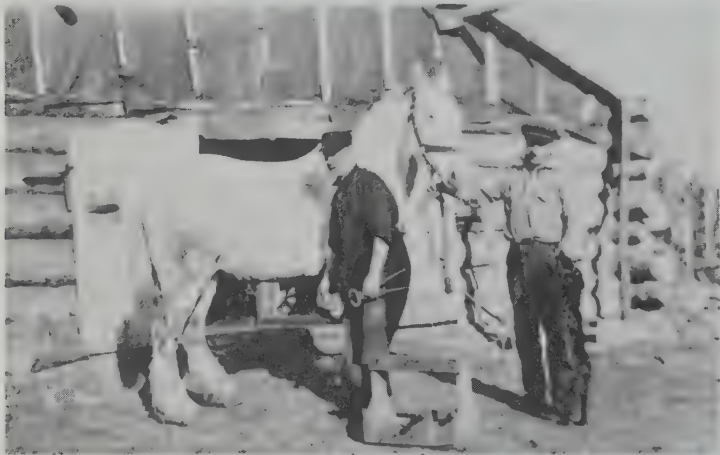
Gardens needed weeding and the whole family helped out. Building in background is the original P. Tansem store on Wanham's main street. Left to Right: Vera, Gladys, Minnie, Raymond, Art and Peter Tansem.



Surveying: A Skill not possessed by many settlers. A crew working in the Smoky area. Charlie Gummerson at left - rest unknown.



Hauling pulpwood. Thousands and thousands of logs were cut and hauled from the area. Howard Zmean with a load in 1946.



The blacksmith and shoeing of horses was part of early homestead life. Here Lynwood Laughy trims a horse of Joe Meyers - shown holding the horse.



Pioneers had skills and they improvised making use of things at hand. A water wheel used for grinding flour built by Freidrich Bohnke.



Canning and washing up. Both chores in the fall. Sara Jacobsen and Jenny Olson.



Chicken for dinner! Hack the head off and get the frying pan ready. A. Dudding and Guy Norton on the Norton homestead - 1928.



Trapping and hunting of animals, especially coyotes, squirrels and weasels provided early settlers with money for basics. Mrs. Trumpower holding a coyote skin at arm's length.



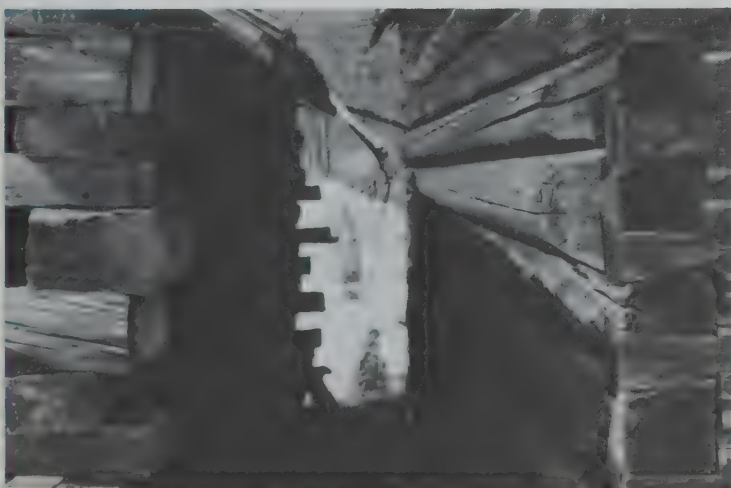
Rough dovetail corners 1930-40 - Nagel Bros.



A day of sorrow. The grave dug by pick and shovel. A neighbour laid to rest and the grave covered. Pete Anderson gone. Cornelius and Jenny Olson - others unknown.



Ice House built in 1939 by Nagel. Water has always been a problem in this area. Many pioneers cut large blocks of ice during the winter then packed them in sawdust in their ice houses. These blocks of ice provided a fresh water supply for most of the summers.



Corners improved as the architects developed their skills. 1928-1939 - P.W. Nagel shack and ice house.



John Noren's Homestead Shack. Left to Right: Jalmar Noren, Rowland Butterwick, Carl Holmgren and John Noren. Note the grindstone that was used for sharpening the axes to slash timber on the homestead.



Sam Parlee with ox yokes used to break the first 40 acres on N.W.T. homestead at the turn of the century by W.N. Parlee.



You had to learn out of necessity. When the tire went flat you fix her with patching and patience. Travellers passing the Howards.



Pioneers used ingenuity for completing tasks. Can you think of a better way to hold a cross-cut saw to file the teeth? W.F. Laughy and his saw filing stand.



One of the drawbacks at Peoria - shortage of water. Here a crew are digging for water - the horse went round and round - 1941.



Several shingle mills operated in the area. This one operated by Maurice Griffiths in the Peoria district.



Somebody owned a buzz saw so every fall or early winter the rounds were made to cut the winter's wood supply. Here a crew at work on Edward Sather's homestead.



Bringing in the firewood. Harold Best with Bob and Jim Sawers helping out.

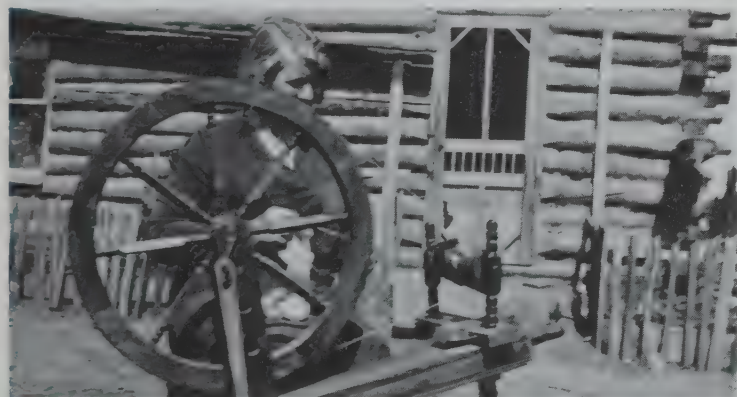




It took a lot of feed to keep stock through the winter. That meant a lot of back breaking work in the fall. Stacking bundles with Sam Lee on the stack and Bob Bryce pitching bundles. Bundles were fed direct to stock or often stack threshed later.



When a late spring prevented seeding or an early frost baked the kernels it was time to cut green-feed. Carl Erstad mowing green-feed.



Round and round went the wheel as deft fingers fed the strand and knitting wool appeared. Mrs. Alex Edey at the spinning wheel.



Mr. and Mrs. Rogers. Grandpa holding the yarn while Granny rolls the ball.



Warm wool sweaters with intricate patterns proudly modelled by the men folk. Sweaters made by Mrs. Freidrich Bohnke using homespun yarn. Left to Right: Jim McDonald, Louis Kozak, Harry Davis and Ray Metheny.



It took steady bunks and hefty runners to handle the loads of logs hauled to the mills. A special skill was needed to manufacture the logging sleighs. Lynwood Laughy, blacksmith and woodsman, completes a set.



The rough lumber turned into finished boards at the planer. Emil Bohnke feeding the mill and Arthur tailing at their mill.



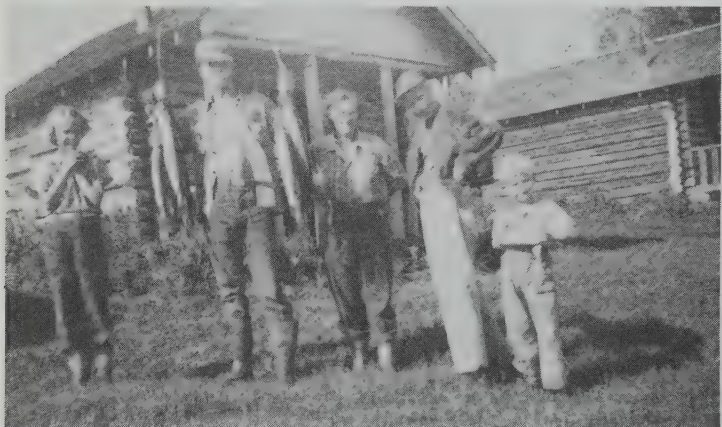
The fishermen showing off the rainbow trout and grayling caught near Hudson's Hope. Left to Right: Stewart Bennett, Eric Sevre, George Olson and Al Fimrite.



Kinda hard to starve you out on the farm. Winter's pork hanging - ready for cutting.



Barnyard fowl - always a part of farm life in the early days. Carl Erstad known for his hefty turkeys and Plymouth Rock chickens.



Good Fishin! Carlo Jacobsen displays a fair catch. Left to Right: Lillian, Carlo, Mrs. Jacobsen, Arnie and Melvin.



Moving buildings to store grain was always a farm job. Here Dea Moore is moving one with horses.



Wilburn and Mrs. Wallington showing off the annual moose that W.J. bagged each year. This one gotten when "Pop" was in his seventies.



Fred Bennett on skis made by Ada Bennett and Alice on a sleigh made by Fred. (Method in Bennett Story).

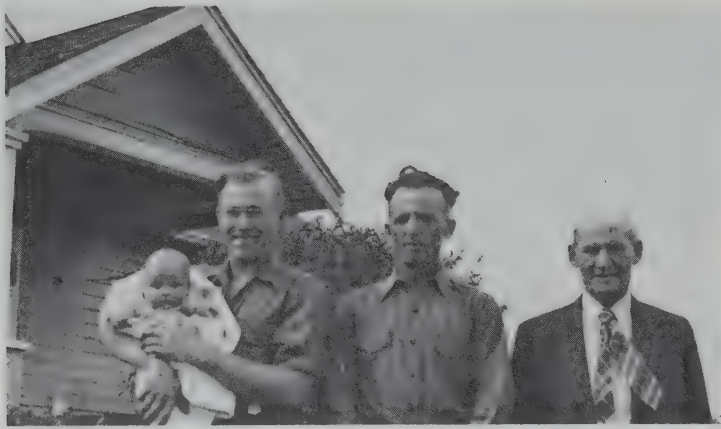


Chris Bankhead with a bear shot on the farm in 1948.

Photos and Things



Sod-roofed shelter in which a baby girl was born in 1930.



Four Generations - Sather Family - 1949. Left to Right: Stanley holding Barry, Emil and Edward.



The Elhorn Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Al, Ruth, Raymond and Jim. Front Row: Gary, Bert and Arlene.



Jack Murray with his sister on left and his brother's wife on right.



Helen Stepaniuk and Wilma Bush.



The Bob Parlee Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Norma, Bob and Brenda. Front Row: Diane and Gordon.



Last Service Conducted by Rev. Dick Moore. Left to Right: Peter Tansem, B.B. Russell, W. Tansem, H. Beamer, Ann Sather, Joyce Edey, Florence Sather, Mrs. Russell, Grandma Sather, Ida Tansem, Mrs. Jennings, Harry Beamer Jr., Mary Sather, Delphine Lampert, Mrs. Blonski, Mrs. Jacobsen, Blanche Tansem, Harold Peebles, Gordon Tansem, Marius Olson, Mrs. M. Olson, Laura Tansem, Rev. Moore, Harvey Russell, Bobby Tansem, Gary Tansem, Joyce Edey and Douglas Edey.



Annie Bankhead on a horse on Wanham's main street in 1919. Vera Tansem standing - Pete Tansem's store in background.

15-

Spirit River, Alta. Aug 16th 1923



UNION BANK OF CANADA

SPIRIT RIVER BRANCH



Pay to *Kochshutt Plow Co* or *Bearer*
One Hundred Dollars *700 Dollars*
100.00
For Binder Front & wood *Hanson*



Central Hall - 6 miles south of Wanham - built in 1932. It was originally located on the hill above Kakut Creek and was the site of most social activities in the area.



Smiling Faces -
Helen Jakubowski, Lily Nelitz, Clare Lampert, Steffa Jakubowski, Doreen Playdon.



Mr. and Mrs. Joe Umpherville - parents of Ethel Keller. They lived in the Belloy district for several years. 1959.



Mr. and Mrs. Dopher Sr. - parents of Gus and Alec.

LOGAN MAIL ORDER CO.

REGISTERED WITH MANITOBA GOVERNMENT

210 Logan Ave.

WINNIPEG, CAN.

February 13th., 1939.

Postmaster;

Wanham, Alberta.

Dear Sir;

Today we have received a letter from Mrs. [redacted]; at Wanham; Alberta; re coat sent out to her son at Wanham; on December 5th; c. o. d. for \$5.15.

[redacted] writes us to release order for \$2.50; as that is all she can pay; and she will remit balance of \$2.50; in 30 days time; by m.s. We have agreed to her terms; as we want to help her son out; so you will please release order to [redacted] for \$2.50;

We have written [redacted] to call at your post office; and hope that you will release order to her for \$2.50; plus c. o. d. and post office charges

We are doing this for [redacted] as her son needs the overcoat; in the cold weather.

Hoping to be favored with this request; thanking you for your kind attention; in this matter; we remain; yours very truly; Logan Mail Order.

Birch Hills Co-operative Ass'n Ltd.

GENERAL MERCHANTS

Wanham, Alta.

1939

M

Account Forwarded

Amount \$3.50



The Dennis Sather Family. Left to Right: Craig, Allison with David, Dennis, Susan.



The big John Deere. Left to Right: Hans Mortenson, John Christensen, "Mac" Watt and Ed Harrington.



Lola Schwartz

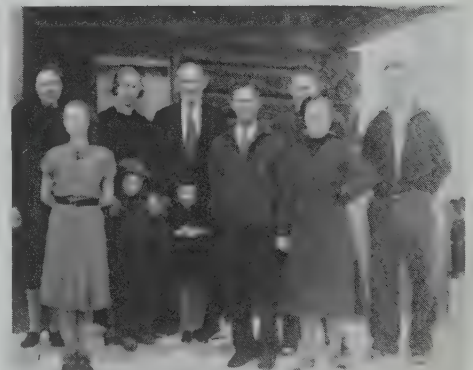


Dave Moore and Cliff Tansem. Dave was the first U.G.G. elevator agent.



Mrs. Pickard

Back Row, Left to Right: Vera Laughy, Mrs. Laughy, Bill Laughy, Buddy Metz, Bill Laughy Jr. Front Row: Ethel, Robbie and Franny Metz, Robert Metz and Frances Metz.





Making Music. Left to Right: Carl Osbak, Earl Lang, Mike Uhryn, unknown. Front Row: Carl Erstad.



Mrs. Jenny Olson and Her Children - 1980. Standing: Knut, Betty, Gordon, Ella and Normand. Seated: Mrs. Olson.



Look for: Mrs. Jacobsen, Lena Bush, Mrs. Wiegel, Mrs. Olson, Betty (Olson) Blois, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Bramlet. 2 people unknown.



The Jack Murray Family - 1959. Back Row, Left to Right: Georgina, Helen, Pete, Ivy, Jack. Front Row; Grace, Mary and Muriel.



Richard Johnson and Gus Thorin threshing.



Oldtimers About 1925. Back Row, Left to Right: Mae Hood, Hazel, Sonny, Mrs. Sadie Tansem, Maude Wells. Front Row: Fred Nelson, Dick Wells, Delbert Wells holding Ralph, Mr. Hood, Ole Tansem and Albert Dudding.



Jack Garrett lived 4 miles west of Wanham close to the railway tracks. He had been - so the story went - an engineer or brakeman. He waved at each passing train during the day and at night a swinging lantern light was answered by a whistle from the passing train. Jack is shown with bears shot with his rifle which he called his "Wham Wagon".



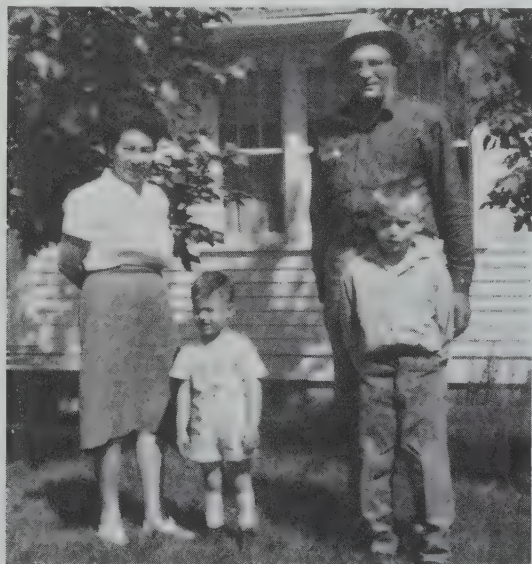
Margaret Jones



Marion and Doug Leriger and Audrey Laughy (Fysh) - 1954. Marion is also a former District Nurse.



Take a look at these classy duds! Left to Right: Gladys Tansem, Molly Murphy, Edna Butler, Onagh Harrington, Dora Neibergall and Clara Hauser.



The Roy Keller Family - 1966. Ethel and Roy, Don and LaVerne.



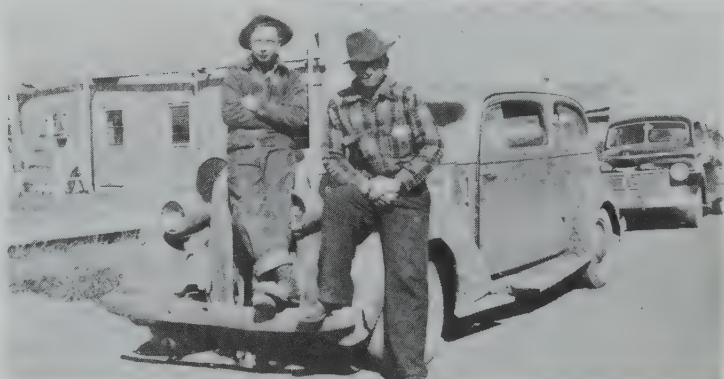
V E Day Parade on Wanham's Main Street - 1945.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Trumpower



Ole Tansem beside his home.



Jack Cameron and Bud Rutherford.



The Wallace Tansem Family. Left to Right: Wallace, Keith Spry, Doris holding baby Brent LaCroix, Carol Spry (Tansem), Cameron Spry, Brenda LaCroix (Tansem), Kelly Tansem, Raymond LaCroix holding Ryan LaCroix, Jasmine Spry and Leslie Spry.



The Adolph Peddy Family - about 1952. Back Row, Left to Right: Harold, Lawrence, Adolph, Mary, Rita, Dorothy. Front Row: Hilde, Gloria, Ruth, Joan and Wilfred.



Family Picnic at Ole Tansem's place - 1918.



Patsy Leriger on a pet Porker.



Back Row: Yvette Bouchard, Roberta Johnston (nee Wilde). Front Row: Gaspard Bouchard holding son Lionel, Marvin Johnston holding son Dwayne.



In Service for their Country



Florian Baranec



Robert Blouin



Charles K. Botham



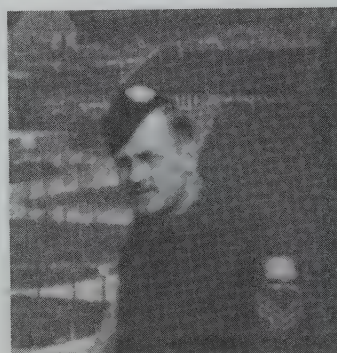
Charles Bouchard



Charles Brissard



Eileen Edey



Al Elhorn



Leonard Evenson

These are some of the people who served in the Armed Forces. Though not a complete record, it is a tribute to all who served.



Lloyd Evenson



Lloyd Fowler



P.J. Greany



Svend Hansen



Elaine Harrington



Mayther Hryciuk



Bert Kandt



Robert Kandt



Sophie Kandt



Roy Keller



Sam Kenny



Bill Laughy



Roy Laughy



Albert Leriger



Lawrence Leriger



Gordon MacDonald



Jack Martin



Milton Metz



Ron Pearson



Stanley Pierog



Joe Meyer



Herb Middleton



Frank Podruzny



John Podruzny



Jim Munro



Barry Murphy



Herman Reum



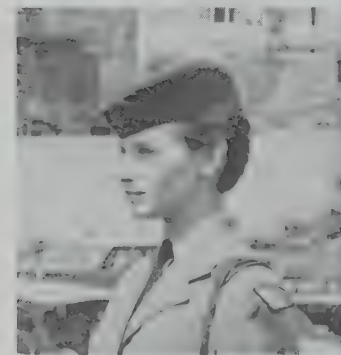
William Sallis



James Murphy



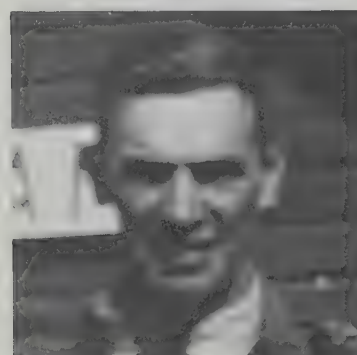
Peter Murray



Margaret (Peggy) Sather



Julian St. Pierre



Guy Norton



Albert Nybakken



Clarence Tansem



David Tansem



LeRoy Tansem



Rev. Father Thomas



Howard Zmean



Robert Wade



D.M. (Mac) Watt



V E Day Parade in Wanham - 1945.



Jim Watson



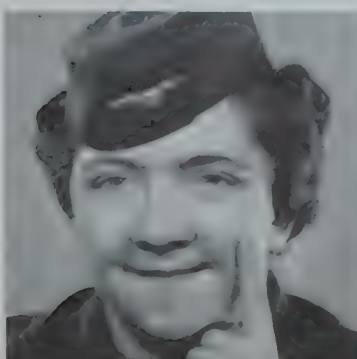
Delbert Wells



Ralph Wells



Charlie Whelan



Roberta (Wilde) Johnston



Hank Wishart



L.A.C. Lloyd Evenson receiving honour diploma for marked distinction on attaining the highest standing in his class as driver mechanic.



File No.-37877

IN VIRTUE OF THE COPYRIGHT ACT

Thereby certify that the **COPYRIGHT** *in the* unpublished musical work
entitled "TRAIL TO RAINBOW'S END"

by Wilbur Laughy
of Wanham, Alberta,

was registered under Serial No. 66635, in REGISTER OF
COPYRIGHTS NO. 16, kept at the Copyright Office, on the
9th day of May, 1945,
in the name of Wilbur Laughy of Wanham, Alberta.

In Testimony Whereof

I have hereunto set my hand, and caused
the Seal of the Copyright Office to be hereunto affixed at
the City of Ottawa, in the Dominion of Canada,
this ninth day of May, in
the year of Our Lord, one thousand nine hundred
and forty-five.

J. H. Smith
Commissioner of Patents



Mr. and Mrs. J.J.
Harrington, Sr.



Jean and Art
Ramsfield.



Harry Jones and
Albert Dudding.



Bill Laughy and Wilf Carter.



The Robert Wade Family. Back Row, Left to Right:
Roy, Robert, Gordon. Front Row: Joan, George,
Marion, Dale and Doris.



The John Wendland Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Elaine, Lloyd, Donna, Doreen. Front Row: Vera, Linda, John.



At Left: Doris Markstead - teacher Belloy - 1943. Right: Jean McLenn - teacher Steel School - 1943.



Jim McSweeney with a 20 lb. prize.

David Jones and Denise Prevost on sidewalk made with Leonard Metz's lumber.



The Music Makers. Left to Right: Gay Prevost, Ozan Prevost, Gladys Tansem, Octave Prevost, Leo Prevost, Camille Prevost, Ray Tansem, Vera Tansem, Yvonne Prevost, Art Tansem. Director: Ed Prevost.



Oscar Oakleaf and Mrs. Duncan Cameron.

PRESTVILLE

Named for B.J. Prest (1884-1967). Born in England he received his education there, becoming a civil engineer. In 1906 he arrived in Canada and joined the Grand Trunk Pacific as a construction engineer and in 1912 went to the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway as office engineer. It was he who was responsible at this time for the naming of a number of stations along this route. In 1931 he joined the Alberta Department of Lands and Mines and later transferred to the Main Highways Branch of the Department of Public Works. From there he went to the Department of Public Works, this time with the Surveys Branch. In 1947 he became Director of Town Planning and retired in 1950.

Charles Geller. An early settler in the Wanham area. Charles built the present cafe - originally used as a pool room.





4-H Beef Club Calf attended by Tony Pierog of Belloy.



Contented Cows on the Steve Howard Farm.



Emil and Edwin Sather with Hereford Bulls.



Horses on the Elhorn Farm.



Everett Parlee and Lynn Neufeld hauling a load of feed with registered Belgians - 1980.



Henry Kent preparing to milk his goats.



Piglets on the Jim Howard Farm.



Purebred cattle and some horses belonging to Jake Brucks.



Sheep on Jim Howard's Farm.



2 yr. old Shorthorn
belonging to Hans
Schmidt.



Everett Parlee with G.D. Gallant Charlie - Registered Simmental.



Sam and Everett Parlee's stallion - Bayou Bob.

Alfalfa plant start slated for spring

WANHAM — The Peace Country's fourth alfalfa-processing plant — and the only one in Alberta wholly owned by farmer-producers — will open in Wanham in the spring.

The \$1 million, 20,000-tons-a-year Wanham and District Alfalfa Processing Co-op plant got started about two years ago through Wanham's COCO organization — the Community of Co-operating Organizations.

"We researched many areas and concluded that the alfalfa plant was the most feasible for this region, one of the best producing areas in the province," chairman Morris Sinkwich said. "One of the things we hope for is that the project will encourage younger people to get back to the land. It will also provide an employment boost."

The plant will have about 30 employees at peak season with a permanent staff of about seven people.

The Wanham plant, located within the village limits, is about the same size as existing plants at Grimshaw and Falher. There are two plants at Falher, put into operation fairly recently. The Grimshaw plant was the first

in the Peace Country.

The plant will convert alfalfa into pellets which are used for livestock feed.

Mr. Sinkwich said the co-op's intent is to serve domestic markets first and then work on export markets. Shareholders will be first considered as suppliers, he said, although other farmers may be able to get a hand in depending on the plant's demands. Alfalfa will be drawn from about a 25-mile radius around the village.

"Alfalfa is a good crop for the Peace Country," Mr. Sinkwich said, "but it generated little revenue in the past. Now, with the plant, it should become a major agricultural product."

Site work has already begun on the project which Mr. Sinkwich said should have a stabilizing effect on the community and promote Wanham's growth.

Mr. Sinkwich said he is available at 962-2405 for further information on the plant. Other board members who can be contacted include John Podruzny at 962-2367 and Peggy Sather at 962-3997.

Additional directors include Pete Sinkwich, Sanford Sorgen, Bill Lunn, Wayne Sather, Taras Putio and Florence Sather.



Twp. 78 R2 26M This information provided by C. Bankhead.

			North		
18	17	16	15	14	13
		Mrs Rouleau	W A Smith Bice Bella		
Carl Hansen		Archie Robinson	Dave Fortier		
7	8	9	10	11	12
	B Posty	Carl Hansen	G. Gilmour	School land	Harry Scott
Dave Baldue	Leqar Swanson	Osear Ferguson	Joe Salone	Mug Selby	Elmer Badette
6	5	4	3	2	1
Dave Baldue Tr.	George Baldue	Sid Francis L. Keriger	Robert Gilmar	Herb Aley	Jim McSweeney Al E. Horn

SOUTH

Twp. 77 RW W6M This information provided by C. Bankhead.

NORTH

H. Thorn	Sam Rouleau	A Fortier	Sid Francis	Bill Fortin	Jim Babbs	Herb Elliot	Tony Saluga	Mike Kaspro	
31	32	33	34	35	36				
K. Prevost	land Prevost	Gene Badette	Walt Francis	J.B. Bank head	Jim Babbs	Frank Kane	Matt Hass	Stanley Karpinski	
B. Prevost	J. Prevost	J.C. Bank head	P.B. Bank head	Walt Francis	J.B. Bank head	Louis Paul	Bill Bankhead	Walter Nash	
30	29	28	27	26	25				
Win. Timponer	Frank Carpenter	School land							
Nathan Bramlet									
19	20	21	22	23	24				



PAINTING BY R. FARRINGTON WELLS

A STOUT HEART AND A STEADY HAND

Compliments of...

PETER TANSEM

GENERAL MERCHANT

Dry Goods and Groceries

AGENT FOR

Essex, Ford Cars and Oliver Machinery - Chalmers Tractors

WANHAM, ALTA.

930 **DECEMBER** 1930

N.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
F.M. 5	1	2	3	4	5	6
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			31	LQ 12	N.M. 19	FQ 27

Compliments

WANHAM MERCANTILE LIMITED

General Merchants

WANHAM

ALBERTA



1937			January				1937	
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT		
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31								



CARL BLONSKI

Groceries and Dry Goods

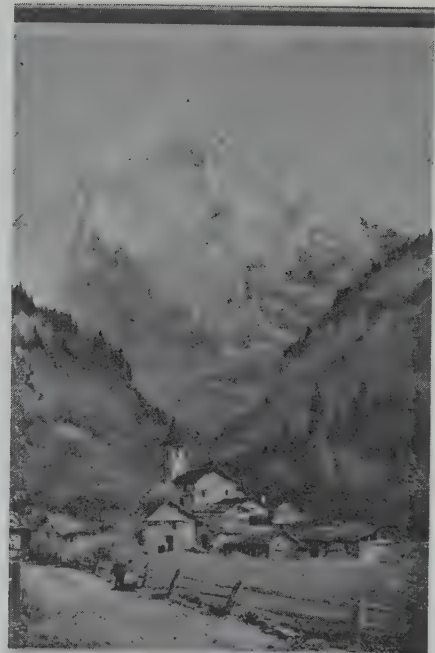
WANHAM, - Alta

1938		JANUARY					1938
Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	
New M. 1-31	First Q. 9	Full M. 16	Last Q. 23				1
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23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29	

Printed in Canada



1944 JANUARY 1944						
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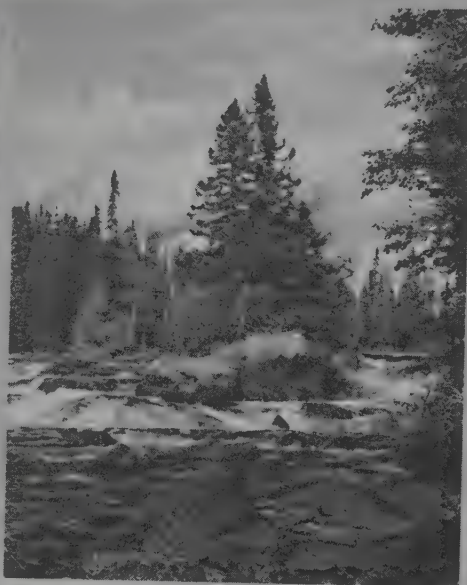
JACOBSEN RESTAURANT

CONFECTIONERY AND TOBACCO

WANHAM

ALTA.

1941 MARCH 1941						
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.
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AUTUMN BEAUTY

BELLOY GENERAL STORE

Phone 962-2412

BELLOY

ALBERTA

1969 JANUARY 1969						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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29	30	31				



MCLEAN'S, HEART VALLEY

Groceries - Dry Goods

Trucking - Imperial Oils



Monica Fortier



Carl Erstad



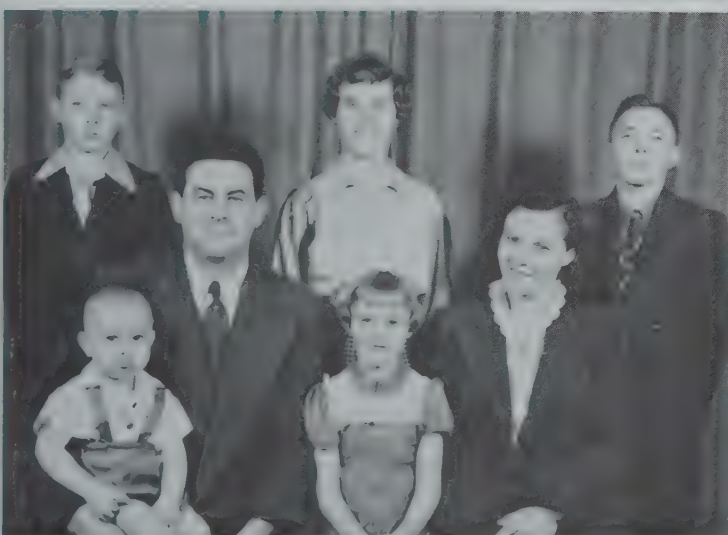
Wilbur Stirling



*Wally and LeRoy
Tansem.*



Albert Olson



The Irving Reiswig Family - about 1953. Back Row, Left to Right: Reg, Karen, Keith. Front Row: Irving holding Bernie, Lacey, Ruth. Missing: Rollie.



Alberta Wheat Pool agent Dennis Haglund presenting award to Volunteer Fire Chief Dale Fleming for saving the elevator during a fire. Standing behind: J. Goodvin, Albert Wells, Terry Foote, Leon Gouchee.



Mr. and Mrs. Roy Cameron.



*Mrs. R. Johnson and
Mrs. R. Sawers.*



*Doris Blonski and
Betty Trump.*

*Pete Jensen and Vera
Sandercock.*



*Mr. and Mrs. G.W.
Munro.*



Ivy Aley - age 7.



*R.C.M.P. Sgt. Linas
and his dog.*



Albert Cox and Nan Hall - 1954.

*Pat and Alice Girard - 50th
Wedding Anniversary.*



Bert Reid

Mr. A. H. McQuarrie
Grand Prairie

[illegible]

Ivor Pierson - section man who boarded at Tansem's holding LeRoy Tansem.



Jim Watson



Vera Sandercock and Hazel Trump on Vera's wedding day.



Margaret and LeRoy Tansem's Wedding Dance. Left to Right: Gladys and Lorne Haralson, Wally Tansem, Dora Tansem, Art Tansem, Vera Sandercock, Dr. Law.



Staffa Jakubowski (Berner) on her wedding day, Edward Jakubowski and Sheena Sawers.



*Ella Pranskat, Sadie
Chewook, Mary
Putio.*



Woking Hotel on the move.

Woking Hotel moved to a new home

WOKING
The Woking Hotel will no longer call Woking home.

The 22-year-old nine-room building, s being moved to Wanham.

The project is anything but a small operation.

Servicemen from AGT, Alberta

Power, Northern Alberta Railways and the building's movers — Mix the

Mover of Edmonton — struggled yesterday and today to clear the gargantuan's path of power and telephone lines and railway crossing warning lights.

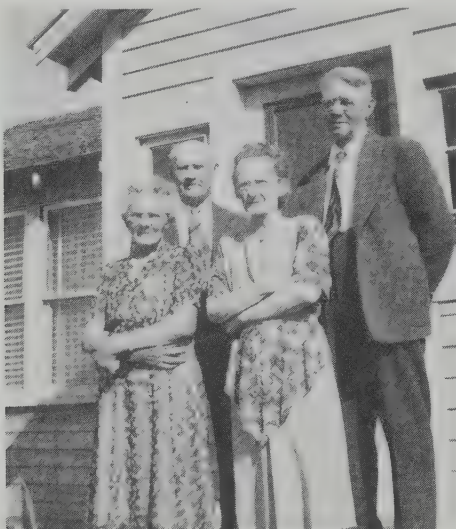
The railway lights were too close to accommodate the 180-ton building's path.

Spokesmen for the mover said the unit would stay off Highway Two as much as possible, taking the secondary road system via Peoria-Bad Heart to Wanham.

The hotel is expected to arrive at its new site later today or tomorrow to be located near the community centre

The Wanham Hotel was destroyed by fire earlier this year.

Wokings's hotel was closed for two years.



Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sather and Mr. and Mrs. Pete Tansem.



Gerald Blonski and Lillian Jacobsen.



HISTORIC QUEBEC

Compliments of

H. THORIN

Cockshutt Farm Implements

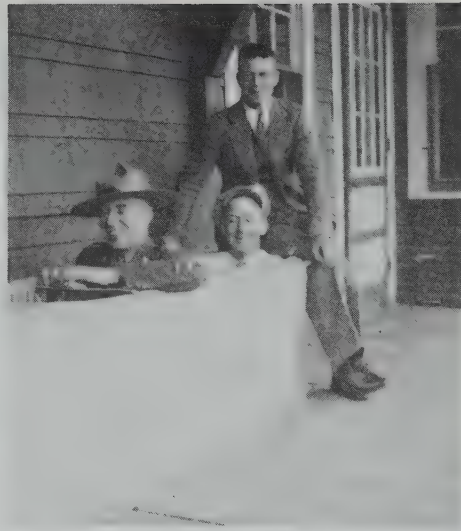
SPIRIT RIVER and WANHAM - ALTA.

1 ST MONTH		JANUARY					1932
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24 31	25	26	27	28	29	30	

Cost-Reducing Equipment Makes Farming Profitable



The Bankhead Family - 1913. Seated, Left to Right: Preston, Laola, Annie and Minnie. Standing: Chris.



Ernie Trump at back with a friend and the R.C.M.P. officer from Spirit River.



Left to Right: Roy Leverington, Louis Tansem, Art Tansem.



The Bankhead's First Log Home - 1916.



Myrtle Wrolson and Hermel Girard.



The Gathering at Mr. Selby's Funeral at Belloy.

The Dudes - Ida and Minnie Tansem.



Family Histories



First Francis Home ~ sod-roofed cabin built in 1915 by
Walter Francis.

THE HERBERT ALEY STORY

by Mildred Aley

Mr. Aley was born in England in 1891. He and his brother came to Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan to look for land. Herb had left his sweetheart back in England, and after the first world war, he sent for her to come to Saskatchewan to be married.

They farmed here for the next ten years, but dry times and no crops made it impossible for Mr. Aley to continue farming. In 1928 he came to Alberta, to the Spirit River area, where he looked for land and filed on a homestead at Belloy.



Herbert Aley age 22.

In 1929, he and his family of two sons, Desmond - age eight, and William - five, moved to the Belloy District. Not having a house of their own, they moved into a house owned by Selbys, where they lived for two years. This house was used by many settlers coming into the area, until they could get logs out to build their own houses. This place was also used as a stopping place on the old Fox Creek road for people passing through on the way west, as it was a main road for many years.



William and Desmond Aley, 1929. Taken at the Selby place where the Aleys stayed while their log house was being built.

The Aleys took foundation logs from the yard where the family built their house, and the remainder was taken from land that is now owned by William Aley, for the rest of the house. Many houses were built from logs and lumber from land south of the present site. Pulp wood was also taken out for sale from the same area. Herb Aley was able to obtain a quarter section of land from a Soldier Settlement grant.

This quarter was later farmed by Desmond, the oldest son, for many years. Land was slowly broken, a few acres at a time with horses, and in later years a tractor was bought to finish breaking the land.

Times were very hard for Herb, who did various jobs for farmers in the area. Every little extra helped to carry the family through the hungry thirties. By this time, a daughter had arrived. She was born at home, with the help of a neighbor. Mrs. Aley had been a Mid-wife in England, and so, with the help of a friend, Ivy arrived safe and sound. Mrs. Aley delivered many babies around Belloy. In these early days, the kids remember that they looked forward to the parcels, books and money that were received from England.

Mrs. Aley was very good with a needle and thread, so a lot of clothes were made by taking hand-me-downs apart and sewing them for her family. She was also a good gardener, and in the early days she grew strawberries and garden produce to sell at the store and to the residents of the town. Milk, cream, butter, cottage cheese and eggs were also sold to help buy the few groceries that were required - sugar, tea, beans, flour and kerosene.

The kids can remember that visiting with their neighbors was about the only social life they knew. This was done by horse and wagon or sleigh. But when they recall the old days, they think of them as the 'good old days'.

Mrs. Aley took sick, and in the spring of 1945, passed away in the University Hospital in Edmonton of cancer. Mr. Aley said that it was with the help of Maude Archibald that he was able to bring his wife back to Belloy to be buried. He said she would give you her shirt when in need of help.

GOOD BREAD

Mr. Aley kept his family together for the next few years. The neighbors talk about him baking bread, and it was so light and fluffly that it pushed the top of his oven up. He did a washing that would put many a housewife to shame.

Mr. Aley lived with his son William and family for many years, and though he had arthritis bad, we never heard him complain once. He loved his trees, flowers and fishing.

In 1967, he moved into Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River, and planned to return to the farm in the spring. Due to illness, he spent some time in the hospital, and never returned home. In August, 1968, he passed away in his sleep in Spirit River Hospital.

His oldest son, Desmond, wife and daughter live in Eaglesham, Alberta, where Desmond was a grader man until a stroke, two years ago.

William and his family farm and live on the original home place. He has three daughters and two sons.

Ivy lives in Kimberly, B.C. with her two daughters and three step-sons.



William Aley Family, 1981. Back Row, Left to Right: Ricky, Bill, Ron. Front Row: Mildred, Mavis, Maureen.

ALFRED AMUNDSON

by Mellie (Amundson) Wiegel

In 1927 Alfred Amundson and two brothers, Melvin and Ingwald, came to the Peoria District from Blackfalds. Alfred filed on a homestead, the N.E. 27-Township 76, Range 2-W6.

In June of 1938 Alfred returned from Blackfalds with a bride, Mellie. From this marriage came five children: Alvin, Frances, Lloyd, Howard and Louise.

Alvin, Frances, and Lloyd obtained most of their schooling at East Peoria. Alvin completed grade nine at East Peoria.



Alfred, Mellie, Frances, Howard, Louise, 1953.

FIRE

On February 12, 1953, the Amundsons lost their three room log house by fire. Alvin was seriously burnt in the fire. Thanks to the help of neighbors, Halvor and Carrie Hegna, Alvin and Lloyd were taken to the hospital. Alvin

spent three months in the Spirit River Hospital and six months in the University Hospital in Edmonton. The community put on a dance to raise money to buy Alvin a new guitar. The family lived in a one room bunk house lent to them by the Harold Dicks. By July of 1953, with the help of friends and neighbors, a new house was built.

The family moved to Grande Prairie in 1956 for a couple of years.

In January of 1958 they moved back to the farm at Peoria.

Alfred passed away on June 30, 1958, at the Grande Prairie Hospital.



Alvin and his guitar in the University Hospital after the fire.



Howard, 1957.

ROSS AND MAUDE ARCHIBALD GRIZZLY BEAR PRAIRIE

by Allen Archibald

Dad and Mother, known by their friends as "Ross" and "Maude", first met and married in the coal-branch mining towns of southwest Alberta. Shortly thereafter, with their 3 year old son Allen, they were among the early settlers of what was then known as the Grizzly Bear Prairie. The "prairie" at the time was about 2 miles wide by 10 miles long, lying astride the old Grouard Trail, the original route used by the first settlers prior to the railroad.

The settlement at the time of the Archibald's arrival was boundaried on the south by the then heavily-wooded Birch Hills and consisted of about 25 homesteaders, many of whom were bachelors. The Grizzly Bear prairie was divided in name by the common expression "Eastend" and "Westend", eventually the Belloy and Wanham sectors of the community. Ross and Maude filed on a homestead in the "Westend" area approximately 3 miles southwest of the present town of Wanham.

Having graduated from a Calgary Normal School as a teacher, Ross took up teaching duties in the first "Westend" school, riding his buckskin saddle pony

"Boy" to and from the one-room schoolhouse which was located about 2 miles east from the homestead log cabin. He was the sole teacher of the area's 10 or 12 youngsters of those pioneer days.

The only form of social recreation at the time was the odd "get together" in the respective homesteaders' cabins. And because Ross enjoyed entertaining by song, guitar or fiddle, he was an integral part of all such early gatherings. His rendition of "She's the Lass for Me!" and many other songs that he mastered were never tiring to an always appreciative homesteader's audience. And then, of course, would come the clearing of the floor to make way for the oldtime dances.

To supplement the meagre teaching wages of the time, Ross and Maude resided temporarily in railroad housing in the "Eastend" (now Belloy). Ross labored as a lumber loader and checker for the Rod MacKrimon sawmill, which operated from an extensive timberberth located about 6 miles due south of the Belloy siding.



Ross, Maude, Anna and Allen, children: Earl and Elenore taken at the entrance of Archibald General Store, Belloy, 1940.

HILLS OF BIRCH

The Birch Hills at that time were beautifully forested, to an extent probably unbelievable to present-day residents. Millions of board feet of grade A lumber was marketed before the forest fires, a few years later devastated the region. It was, as the original name applied, the natural home of the grizzly and black bears. Early settlers were often visited by such as they foraged in their scattered fields or made off with one of their squealing porkers.

The Archibald family left the District for a few years as Ross pursued his teaching career in the Spirit River district. Then in 1928, after retiring as a school teacher, he and Maude established a General Store at the new townsite of Belloy, which was then becoming quite an active center for the many new settlers to take up homesteading both north and south of the original "prairie".

In those years, public facilities including hospital service, were nonexistent. Ross, having the only vehicle for transport, and because of his teacher-training, was often called upon by the new settlers for everything from "stork" duties, emergency transportation, notarizing, to the job of foreman for the forestfire crews that were called upon from time to time to save local residents from the devastating holocausts that swept the area.

Ross, in the middle thirties, became quite active in Bible-teaching work throughout the area, and was instrumental in founding a congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses that ultimately embraced about 40 of the Belloy - Wanham residents in the early 1940's. Their meeting place was the Dave Bolduc Jr. farm house, that had been vacated after Dave's untimely death. Ross and Maude are now both deceased.

THE BANKHEAD STORY

by Leona Bankhead

In May of 1915 Mr. and Mrs. Pres Bankhead and their children Chris, Levola and Annie left Wallowa, Oregon, to seek homesteads in the Peace River country. They travelled by caravan from Wallowa to the border at Kingsgate, Idaho. There, after passing through three officials, they boarded a train for Edmonton, Alberta.

In Edmonton, they resided at Immigration Hall headquarters. This was necessary for foreigners to gather more information regarding homesteading in Canada. While awaiting more data, they met Mr. and Mrs. Fleon



Taken at Whitelaw, Jan. 1933. Left to Right: Leona, Chris, Pres Bankhead, Bob Donaldson holding son Carl, Annie Donaldson with children Esther and John.

and family. The Fleons were also coming to the Peace River Region to homestead. Mr. Bankhead and Mr. Fleon used the same boxcar to load their effects and livestock in. Chris was in charge of the effects and livestock till the car arrived at Culp - the end of the steel then. When the train would stop, Chris would have to mow hay or grass along the track sides to feed the animals. Water had to be given too. The trains were very slow, - tracks and road beds were very uncertain and unpredictable due to weather, etc. The rest of the Bankheads and the Fleons travelled to Culp in the

passenger train. At Culp they unloaded their belongings into caravans. Mr. Fleon's son and Chris herded the livestock on foot. It took them a week to travel from Culp to Rycroft.

By June of 1915 the Bankheads and Fleons had parted company at Rycroft. The Bankheads went to Bear Lake near Peace River. Pres Bankhead located his brother Jim who was settled near Reno. He told Jim about coming through the Egg Lake country. that was the area Jim was looking for, so with itchy feet, again Jim decided to pull up stakes at Reno and go to Egg Lake.

Pres Bankheads' went back to Wanham - Belloy country. This area was then known as the Great Grizzly Bear Prairie. There were few settlers here then.

SQUATTING

They met Mr. Bill Trumpower. He was a real talker and wanted settlers. He showed them much land near and around the Birch Hills and they considered this better land than what they travelled through at Egg Lake. There were more prairie openings and also better roads or trails, and not nearly as many sloughs. The area was still unsurveyed, so they squatted on the north half section of 29, T77 - R2, W6M, near the Birch Hills. As summer was slipping, they decided to put up feed for their livestock and build a home. They cut logs and put up the walls and a sod roof, all before freeze-up.

Money and work were scarce, so Chris gathered laundry from men making ties for the railroad at the Hickey stopping place, east of Belloy. Mrs. Bankhead would do the laundry. They also trapped fur bearing animals to get the necessary money for groceries and other supplies. The nearest shopping centre and post office was Spirit River which was some 25 miles away.

FLU EPIDEMIC

During 1918-1920 there was a flu epidemic and everyone in the district had it. Minnie Bankhead passed



The Bankhead Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Elmer, Lyle, Leland, Lonnie. Middle Row: Erna, Beulah, Levola, Darlene. Front Row: Chris and Leona.

away due to the flu in March of 1920. She was buried on Robert Gilmore's land. There were seven others as well, laid to rest there.

Annie Bankhead married Robert Donaldson of Whitelaw in 1926. Children born to them: Esther, John, Carl, Norah, Roy and Violet. Robert passed away November 1, 1964 and was buried in Grande Prairie. Annie died in Edmonton on October 27, 1970 and is also buried in Grande Prairie.

In October 1932, Chris married Leona Campbell of Eaglesham. To this union there were born four sons and four daughters. The eldest was Elmer, born in 1933 in Grande Prairie. He resides at Whitehorse and has four children - Heath, Keila, Leona and Quintine.

Erna was born at home in Wanham and later married Donald Stark of Bezanson. They have six children: Lois, David, Gloria, Kenneth, Margaret, and Jeanie.

Beulah was born at Wanham. She married Clarence Perry and they have five children: Brenda, Barbara, Wayna, Melody, and Deanna.

Lyle was born at Wanham and married Marilyn Wendland of Peoria and had three children: Sheldon, Pearl and Barrie. Lyle was killed in a truck accident June 4, 1977, near Watino. He was buried at Wanham-Belloy cemetery.

Leland was born at home in Wanham and married Mary Ann Lacey. They have two sons: Arne, and James.

Lonnie was also born at home in Wanham. He married Eileen Dibb and they have two children: Dennis and Shelly.

Levola was born at Wanham and married Ernie Sedore. They have four children: Chris, Norman, Tracy, and Denise.

Darlene was born in Grande Prairie and married Allan



Five Generations, 1973. Standing, Left to Right: Brenda, Beulah. Seated: Leona, Grandmother Campbell, Michelle.

Rotar. They have two children: Candy and Cary.

Pres Bankhead passed away in Grande Prairie hospital in March of 1945. He is buried in the Wanham - Belloy cemetery.

Our first two children, Elmer and Erna, attended the Steele School. About 1945-46 the bus system commenced at Wanham, and the rest of the family finished their schooling in Wanham.

In 1969 the Bankheads had the opportunity to sell their home and farm to the C.P.R. which they did. They then purchased a nice home in Sexsmith. In 1971 Chris suffered a stroke and had to remain in the Grande Prairie Hospital until his passing on November 7, 1978. He is buried in the Wanham - Belloy Cemetery. He is survived by his wife Leona, three sons, Elmer, Leland, and Lonnie, and daughters Erna, Beulah, Levola and Darlene, thirty-four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

FLORIAN AND MARGIE BARANEC

by Margie Baranec

The Florian Baranec family began homesteading on the Lassiter land E. 1/2-30-78-2-6 in the spring of 1951. Florian, his wife Margie and daughter Wilma began the task of turning sparse and raw land into a homestead.

Florian's parents were homesteaders in Sedolia, Alberta. In 1942, at age 21 he joined the army. He served active duty in Sicily, Italy, France, Holland and Germany and volunteered for the Pacific duty but learned of the wars end on a home leave. He started farming in 1946 at Mirror, Alberta and the same year married Margie Finch of Stettler.

A daughter, Wilma, was born in 1947 in Stettler, Alberta.

The Lassiters Project offering land to veterans sounded promising.

POLAR BEAR ON THE FARM

Challenges in their new life were many. Tales about the northern wilderness had reached many southern Albertans. Margie, wary of her new habitat, had her first experience of wild life when a black bear roused the garbage around their trailer. The highlight was yet to come. The following winter she cautioned her daughter to stay indoors as a polar bear was sitting on a hill a quarter of a mile away. Her relief only led to embarrassment when she learned it was only a big white owl.

Their first home was a small 12x6 trailer, brought with them.

Florian built a house from logs hauled from the Burnt River by horses and sawed into rough lumber. Cattle, pigs and chickens added to the farming operation. The square timber barn was built in time for the first-born calf. Livestock was a necessity for expenses.

Wilma attended Wanham school and graduated in 1965. She married Brent Larson (son of Rose and Palmer Larson of Eaglesham) in 1966. Three sons make up their family; Shawn born in 1967; Troy in 1971 and Ryan in 1973. After living in Rycroft and Grande Prairie, Wilma

and Brent moved to Wanham in 1972 and presently live on Lassiter land N.E. 32-78-2-6- originally homesteaded by Melvin Skage.

THE BEAMER FAMILY

by Harry Beamer Jr.

It is a cool evening, September 23rd, 1980, and I look out the window at the many colors of fall slowly covering the surrounding valley and hills and it brings to mind other falls in years past and this too brings back memories of my boyhood days on the farm.

It was a great time of year, the harvesting of grain and preparation for winter, my mother preserving fruits and vegetables of many kinds. It held a special sort of magic for me. I have many such cherished memories of those years as a boy spent with my parents, Harry and Margaret Beamer.

They came from Ontario; my Mother from the Manitoulin Island, born there in 1900 and moving to the Edmonton area as a young girl.

My Father was born in Guelph, Ontario, in 1895 and he too moved with his parents to the west as a small boy. They lived for a time in Oxbow, Saskatchewan, and then moved to Vancouver. Dad lived there through his boyhood and after finishing high school he went back to Southern Alberta to work for his Uncle and spent several years there.

Like many young men, he tried his hand at many different jobs and with a natural liking for stock he worked on some of the large cattle ranches in the High River area.

At some period in this time, he met and married my mother and they began life together there. After a few years had passed, they decided to moved out to Vancouver and it was while living there my sister Jeanne was born.

The prairies seemed to beckon once again and so they moved to Edmonton and this brought them close to my



Harry and Margaret Beamer - 1972.

mother's parents who lived just north of Edmonton.

Both parents and my sister went through the 1918 flu epidemic and it was during this time that a son was born but survived only a few days, a victim of the flu epidemic.

My father took his apprenticeship at the electrical trade and worked at this business for several years but building trades took a turn for the worse and dad decided to try his luck as a salesman. This he did, going to work for the Gainers Meat Packing Company. I cannot recall how long he worked for Gainers but after I was born he changed over to the Motor Car Company of Edmonton.

In the year 1929, the company moved our family; Harry and Margaret, my sister Jeanne and myself, Harry Jr., to Grande Prairie, Alberta. Dad was the first resident representative for Motor Car Supply Company in the Peace River area.



Harry and Margaret Beamer. Golden Wedding, 1965.

As many will remember only too well, that year was the beginning of what became known as, "The Dirty Thirties", the depression years. Business ventures and trade slumped to an all-time low and took its toll. The job with Motor Car Supply became nonexistent and dad and mother moved to the farm. First of all just east of Kleskun Lake and later to a rented farm just east of the town of Sexsmith, Alberta.

In 1935, dad and mother moved again to the area south of Wanham, Alberta, and took up farming in the Heart Valley District, actually on its western edge in the West Vale area.

This is where my sister Frances was born and our family lived there for many years. We knew many fine friends and neighbours and although times were difficult, we enjoyed many great social times together and as my parents often remarked, true friendships developed in those trying times and many are the memories of those years spent in that valley, never to be forgotten.

Harry and Margaret Beamer moved into the town of Wanham, Alberta, about 1952 and settled there as a

permanent residence. My mother, always a true lover of flowers and nature, had a small garden and flowerbeds and it was then that she took a deep interest in oil painting. Her paintings became well known throughout the area and many people today have a scene that she painted hanging on their wall.

My dad spent his leisure hours in his small workshop making picture frames for my mother and other wood working hobbies; and thus they spent their golden years together. They both were active in the Presbyterian Church in Wanham for many years as well.

My sisters, Jeanne and Frances, both live in Southern British Columbia and their families are now grown and are away on their own.

How the years do go by, and so it was that my father, his health not being good, became ill in 1975 and has been hospitalized in Grande Prairie since that time.

My mother's health also became poor in November, 1978, she passed away and was laid to rest in the Wanham Cemetery.

This has been a brief story of how the Beamer family came and lived in the Peace country and we hope it will fill in a portion of the history that is to be written about it and of those people who came and settled the Peace River country in the early years.

LENARD (JIM) AND CARRIE BEARD

by Wanda Fowler

My grandparents, Lenard and Carrie Beard and family, arrived in the Peace River area in September, 1912, by mule team over the Edson Trail. They settled in the Sexsmith-Kleskun Lake area until 1928 when they then homesteaded 15 miles south of Belloy (about 21 miles from Wanham). The homestead was in a corner where the Bad Heart River runs into the Big Smoky. I lived with my grandparents off and on when I was very young, then at the age of nine, I left my father's home in Edmonton, the year of the big flood, with family friends,



Carrie and Lenard Beard, February, 1955.

in an old Model A Ford car to live permanently with my grandparents. On that trip we travelled 35 miles by scow across Lesser Slave Lake. That night we were offered a free room in the Slave Lake Hotel. The water was up to the second floor, so, needless to say, we preferred to camp out on dry land and fight mosquitoes! It took us three weeks to make the trip from Edmonton to Sexsmith. I flew to the homestead with Jack and Nellie Neys of Sexsmith in Jack's airplane. We landed in Grandad's big wheat field.

In the summer months Grandad had a hired man - a bachelor neighbor, Charlie Leggatt. Wages at that time were one dollar per day plus room and board. I followed Grandad and Charlie around helping with chores and in the fields as this type of work was what I really liked. It didn't worry Grandma as she enjoyed doing her own housework and was a fabulous cook.

In 1940 Charlie left us to join the army. After that I was the hired "man". Grandad bought a new McCormick Deering tractor and after he mowed down a few sections of the pig pen fence because the darned thing wouldn't stop when he hollered "whoa", he decided I should be the tractor operator and he would stick to horses.

In the spring of 1944 the farm was sold to Fred Reiswig and his son, Irving - it is still in the Reiswig family.

We moved to the Vancouver area. After one year I just had to come back. Another year the folks moved back, built a home in Belloy. A few years later, due to Grandad's failing health, they moved to Sexsmith, their final home. Grandad passed away in October, 1954, at the age of 90 and Grandma followed in October, six years later, aged 88.

I married Lloyd Fowler in 1946 at Wanham. Years later we and our five children moved to Chetwynd, B.C. Our children all live here within a 25 mile radius.

In August, 1979, I went back to look at the old farm. Grandad's old smokehouse and machine shed were still standing. I walked out to the Smoky River banks where I had spent so much of my time years ago - what emotions I felt as so many old memories rushed back to me!



Lenard, Carrie, Nellie Neys holding Henry, Wanda and Mildred, 1929.

BENNETT, STEWART AND CATHERINE

by Catherine Bennett



Back Row, Left to Right: Don, Sandra, Ron, Catherine, Ellen, Rick and Janice. Front Row: Candace, Gwen, Lynn, Amanda, Dean, and Dallas.

My parents were both born in Scotland. They met and married in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I was born. They came to the Peace River Country in the fall of 1917 and settled to farm in Hythe.

Stewart Bennett was born in Arcola, Saskatchewan. His grandparents moved to Arcola from Brampton, Ontario. He moved to Hythe in the 1930's, where we met. Stewart and I were married in December, 1941, the week of the Pearl Harbor Attack. We operated a hog ranch in the Rolla, B.C., district and the next spring we moved to a farm just south of Dawson Creek. Later we moved to Hythe and managed the hotel.

In the spring of 1944 Stewart was offered the Alberta Wheat Pool elevator in Wanham, with a salary of \$130 a month which was a good wage at that time. Our daughter, Ellen, was born in March and we moved to Wanham in the middle of April. Stewart was there ahead of Ellen and me. We arrived by train. As we travelled through the bush, I thought it very shaggy and hoped that Wanham would be nicer. When the conductor let me off I was sure there was some mistake. Mr. Smith, the station agent, informed me the town was one-half mile away through the trees. So my first impression of Wanham wasn't very good.

WATER

It was a very dry town - remember I came from Hythe, a district of flowing wells. In Wanham we got twelve or fourteen pails of water a week, I believe, unless it rained. There was very little rain and, when there was, by the time the roofs were soaked up, there was no water for the barrells. Toward fall we had a good rain which filled the barrells. During the night some stray horses drank the water and upset what they didn't want.

Some of the "oldtimers" I remember were Tansems,

Lerigers, Pickards, Gerards, Chiltons, Harringtons, and Sandercocks. The Reverend Hancock was the Minister at the Presbyterian Church at that time. There were not many automobiles around; an oil delivery truck was owned by Harringtons, Lerigers and Ed Prevosts.



Left to Right: Arnie Jacobsen, Albert Leriger, Stewart Bennett, Edwin Sather, man from Spirit River.

FIRST OUTINGS

Our first outing that summer was to a picnic at the West Burnt. Mr. and Mrs. Jacobsen took us with them in their wagon pulled by a pair of black horses. I remember one of the horses being sick on the way but he improved by the time we started home. We met Mr. and Mrs. Richard Johnson and family for the first time at the picnic.

The next trip away from home was to Spirit River with the Rev. Hancocks. As we stepped out of the car on main street and looked over the valley below, I turned to my husband and said, "Why don't you apply for an elevator here?" He didn't go along with that idea though, as he thought the streets were too icy in the winter.

I remember purchasing two second-hand chairs. Furniture was hard to get during the war years. Sweaters, underwear and ladies' stockings were also difficult to come by until nylon began to boom. We had ration books with so many coupons each month for sugar, tea, coffee, butter and jam. For entertainment we organized softball games and had dances.

PAINTING PRECAUTIONS

Mr. Leriger hauled the mail from the post office to the station and anyone who wished to ride along was always welcome. He used a team of horses and a flat dray in winter, and his car during the summer. I remember when the new Wheat Pool house was being painted, the workers would try to get as much done as possible before noon and would not begin painting again until after three o'clock. The train would arrive with the mail at 3 o'clock. Mr. Leriger would fly by in his car with the top down, raising a cloud of dust, which certainly wasn't wanted on new paint, thus necessitating the work delay.

Later, when the boys returned from war service, everyone hustled. Lots of showers and weddings took

place. The young veterans were kept busy clearing their land on the Lassiter Project, getting it ready for farming and, of course, there were lots of cars on the market to keep everyone going. We were in Wanham six years before we had our first car.

Our son, Bill, was born in the spring of 1948. It was about this time that everyone started thinking hardball. This interested Stewart as he liked baseball and he was involved in coaching for some years. Wanham had a good team so we were able to see some good, close ballgames.

By now we were able to get about and see some of the country surrounding Wanham. Some of the scenic places we enjoyed were: from the top of the Birch Hills looking over the Peace Valley; from the Peoria road (runs east and west) overlooking the Heart Valley District; south of Dave Kandt on the banks of the Smoky River, overlooking the flats; and the Shultz flats as well. All so very lovely in the fall of the year.

Daughter, Janice, was born in 1950 and our twins, Ron and Don, arrived in 1953, the first twins in the Wanham area.

Stewart was killed in a hunting accident in the fall of 1959. The following spring the children and I purchased the Walter Francis farm, east of Wanham. We made out quite well and grew some good wheat crops. I was thankful we had such good neighbors who helped us over the rough times.

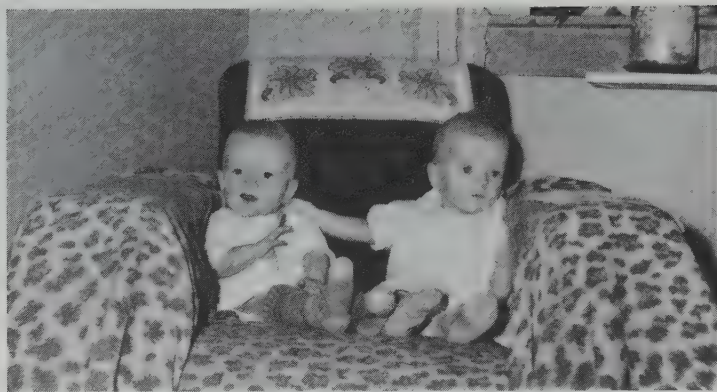


Bill Bennett on old Smokey, 1954.

ENJOYING OUR FARM

A creek with trees along its banks ran through our land. We could hear the water moving and the wind whispering through the trees while we were in our beds. Sometimes the first snow of the season would come in the night, a silent snow. One could know without looking outside there was snow on the ground - everything was so still.

Spring was for waiting and watching; the snow melting down in the fields and bare patches appearing; waiting for the birds to return; watching the trees turn green in a certain light before bursting into leaf; hearing the first frog; waiting for the flowers to break through the soil to absorb the sunlight; smelling the earth; farmers plowing



Ron and Don.

and planting; everyone busy. This was spring!

Fall was also a favorite season. The bright days and crisp mornings and evenings; seeing the birds flocking together and moving toward the south.

I remember one fall we had a good lot of summerfallow with green growth on it. Flocks of geese landed there to feed and we enjoyed watching them come in and hearing their wings flap in the evening when landing. In the mornings there would be a lot of noise as they took off into the air, heading for their destination. We never let on to any hunters that the birds had sanctuary on our property.

We didn't have a lot of wildlife around but one winter was an exception. Often three moose would come out of a nearby bluff, cross the field and spend the afternoons on the south side of our barn, warmed by the sun glancing off the wall. When they heard the school bus coming they would take off across the field and disappear into the trees.

Ellen married Richard Kildaw from North Battleford, Saskatchewan. They live in Grande Prairie and have four children: Lynne, Dean, Gwen, and Mark.

Bill married Sandra Lunn from Eaglesham. They live on the farm at Wanham and have three children; Candace, Amanda and Dallas.

Janice married Dan Rossworm from Clear Prairie. They farm and have one son, Amos.

Ron married Iola Reid from Vermillion. They live in Peace River and have two children: Tina and Stewart.

Don married Marlene Bell from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. They live in Grande Prairie and have one daughter, Angie.

The above statistics are as of January 1st, 1980. I am at present working at the Senior Citizens Home in Spirit River as Matron. I have donated my log house, the first home of the Walter Francis family, to the Wanham Museum.

HAROLD BENNETT

by Ada Bennett

In July of 1931, the boss at the lumber company Harold worked for, in New Westminster, announced to the office staff that business was so slack they would be compelled to close down at the end of the year, which they did. This was quite a blow to all at the office. We felt

certain there would be no chance to get a job elsewhere and sooner or later we would have to apply for "relief". There was no such thing as welfare, as it is available today. We had personally helped others who were "on the soup line", so we knew what they had to subsist on. I wrote my sister, Mary Taylor, telling her of our rather uncertain future. She suggested we come to Peoria and get a homestead where we could, at least, grow a garden and have milk, eggs, etc... Harold hung on to his job till the end of the year. I, with our little five year old boy, Fred, came to Peoria in August.

On the first or second night after we arrived, there was a killing frost in Peoria, which destroyed much garden produce completely and the wheat harvest that fall looked more like chaff. I began to wonder what we were getting into. Anyway, my brother-in-law and I went in search of a homestead. Finally we found one that could be cancelled by paying \$200.00 for the improvements (?) on it. That was a huge sum of money for us at that time but I decided to take the quarter although half of it was in a deep ravine, so we really got only about 80 acres of useful land; and this was mostly bush which had to be cleared. Harold had never been on a farm in his life, so you can imagine what we were up against. When he got off the train in Wanham in 1932 and saw nothing but snow, bush and black stumps, he figured this was hopeless. However, we soon bought a cow, chickens and a team of horses.

In the spring, Mrs. Bill Davis gave us some strawberry plants for our garden and we got a few raspberry canes from the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm. We had a very good vegetable garden in 1932 and by the next summer we also had plenty of delicious strawberries, raspberries and saskatoons as well. There was plenty of eggs, milk, cream, butter and chicken to eat, so compared with those on "relief" in Vancouver we were living like millionaires.

DELICIOUS!

We had no money to buy flour so we got Paul Kozak to grind wheat for us on his feed grinder. We put the ground wheat through a sieve, used the fine part for baking and



Harold, Fred and Alice outside the straw barn they constructed.

the coarse for porridge. The bread was flat, dark and heavy, but delicious and wholesome. Homemade potato yeast was used for bread baking. I also made sponge cake with this flour using beaten egg whites to make it light and beet syrup for sweetening. This cake was served with whipped cream also sweetened with the syrup which gave it a carmel flavor. Delicious! Fred declares we have never had better food than we had in those days. One year I made 125 quarts of beet syrup. It was lots of work, but well worth it. We sometimes traded a quart of syrup for some moose meat or venison, a welcome change from domestic chicken or prairie chicken.

HERE'S YOUR BABY

In 1933, we decided that Fred needed a little sister and we knew there were lots of wee ones needing a home, so we arranged to adopt a baby girl. When we met the train in Wanham, it stopped just long enough for the nurse to jump off and hand me a little "bundle" wrapped in a pink blanket, saying "Here's your baby". She also gave us a parcel containing two shirts, two nighties and a dozen diapers for our baby. Believe it or not - those twelve diapers sufficed until our little lady no longer needed them and I always kept her dry, sweet and clean. She was only six weeks old when she came to us.

OUR CHARIOT

We made a two wheeled cart as we had no "Bennett wagon". We were not very good mechanics so, when we had the vehicle finished and climbed in and sat on the seat, we discovered to our chagrin, that the front end flew up and we rolled out at the back. With a little maneuvering we got that error corrected and then travelled in "style" in what we called our "chariot".

On the homestead we lived in a 12 x 16 shack built with a layer of building paper and shiplap nailed to the studdings. We had a large cooking range in one corner and a pot-bellied heater in the opposite corner. There was no chimney - just stove pipes running up through the roof. One night it was 73 degrees below zero Fahrenheit and the trees and stumps cracked like guns in the silent air. When I went out that morning to milk our cow, I would not have been surprised to find her frozen solid, but she was O.K. However, when I milked her the milk almost froze before it reached the pail. I had icicles hanging from my hood and from my eyelashes, and when I accidently touched some metal it felt like touching red-hot iron. You can well imagine that we burned a lot of wood in both stoves to keep from freezing to death.

56 DEGREES BELOW AND BLOWING

But the worst weather we ever encountered was one night when it was 56 degrees Fahrenheit below zero with a strong wind blowing. The snow was blowing through the cracks between the boards and around the windows. There were heaps of snow across the floor. Our baby, Alice, was 7 months old and we had her in her little bed set up on the table and placed as close to the heater as we

dared. Dad and I took turns sitting up that night to keep the fires going in both stoves. I remember wrapping a horse blanket around myself and then sitting close to the heater. When one side got too hot, I would turn around to thaw the freezing side. I kept busy turning back and forth and adding fuel to the stoves. We sat in constant fear that the tar running down the stovepipes would ignite and burn the shack. If this had happened we would have been in real trouble. By morning the wind died down and the sun was shining. We felt much relieved and thankful we were all still alive and well. "All is well that ends well".

One year we had only \$5.00 to see us through the winter. All we got at the grocery store was coal oil and matches and we made a box of matches last a long time by using a splint of wood or bit of paper to transfer a flame from the stove to the lamp, or vice-versa. We made our own soap, and also made candles from beef tallow when we could get some that wasn't fit for food, thus saving on kerosene.

In the winter we melted snow, in a barrel by the stove, for water; in summer we used our snow barrel to catch rain water, but too often we had to carry water up hill from a spring at the bottom of the ravine. I recall one exciting trip down there. The two youngsters came down with me this time and the first thing we saw at the creek was a huge very freshly made bear track. Then we heard the bear in the bush only a few feet away. I picked up our little girl and we scrambled up that hill as fast as we could, minus the two pails of water.



The Bennett home in East Peoria - 1936.

Harold worked in the bush three winters with the Bohnke boys who had a sawmill. the boys paid him in lumber which we needed to build a house, a barn and some grain bins. We hired Dan Reising to build a brick chimney, in our new house. One day when I was home alone there was a terrible wind and this started a chimney fire. It came so suddenly that there was a loud explosion in the chimney which split the thing wide open. The fire was roaring and when I went upstairs the flames were flying out through the wide cracks licking against the wood. Why the wood didn't ignite I'll never know. I put

salt in the stove and this helped to smother the flames. We had to get a new chimney but the house didn't burn.

After Stirling finished his rental term, the Bohnke boys farmed the home quarter in 1940 and 1941. By 1942 Fred, at 16 years of age, worked together with Dorsey Prosser running his tractor. As Prosser had no seed drill, and we did, but no other equipment, this arrangement was of mutual benefit that season. By 1943 we had a tractor, plow etc... and were on our own farming the place Fred still farms today, some 35 years later.

As there was no money to purchase skis for Fred, I decided to make some for him. Selecting four inch by 1 inch boards of suitable length and ensuring the grain of the wood ran backwards so the skis would slide, was the first step. Then we planed the boards to less than one-half inch on the end to be used for turning up. To bend this end I placed the tips in a boiler of hot water on the kitchen stove and left them simmering there for several hours. When the ends were pliable they were stuck between the spokes of a wagon wheel and bent as desired. When they dried, they would stay that way. They were then waxed with para wax and polished. Then leather straps (for over the instep) were fastened in place and Fred's skis were ready. Very often he rode on them for miles while hanging on to a rope fastened to the back of our horse-drawn vehicle.

At a later date Fred made a hand-sleigh for his little sister, Alice, and when he was seven years old built a windmill about eight feet high out of old planks. He twisted boards to serve as paddles and added a pulley and belt. Though his first attempt to make it run was not successful he soon discovered that the paddles had been placed in such a way that they worked against each other. This was easily corrected and all was soon running smoothly.

Fred picked lengths of twine out of the straw stack and joined them together. Before long he had literally yards of it. He made this into rope using the improvised windmill to twist it. This rope was used to tie the cattle and horses and lasted for many years.

One Christmas, when Alice was 2 years old, Fred made a little cutter for her. He acted as the horse and pulled her around the farmyard. Our son also made himself a pair of stilts. These were very well constructed. Being a perfectionist almost from birth, Fred was never satisfied with anything but the best.

MIDWIFE

One chilly night Adolph Peddy knocked on our door about 2 a.m. and asked me to come over right away to help his wife who was in labor. I could soon determine that the baby would arrive pronto. The home was a chilly one room shack, and I had to quickly stoke the fire to sterilize what meager equipment we had on hand. No doctor or nurse was within miles. Fortunately everything went well and the proud parents were blessed with a fine healthy baby boy, (Lawrence Edward Peddy).

While Harold worked in Calgary to get money for the family, I 'held down the fort' at home and managed quite well. One day I heard that Hughie Fraser had his land in Peoria for sale. This interested me as our present land



Alice, Ada and Grandma Bennett.

was many miles from a school, so I went to see him. It wasn't long before I found that although the price was reasonable enough, it was also a good deal more than we had. I told him this as I prepared to leave. Mr. Fraser called me back and offered to sell the place on very generous terms, and - without interest! Hughie was a bachelor and held a position on the school board. He was described as being a good and generous man. His concern for young children and their education prompted him to add, "If this is still beyond your means, I'll let you have a corner of land to build on so the children can be near school".

I thanked him for his kindness, but his last offer had made it possible for me to purchase, and I straight away bought the quarter section. On it there was a warm log cabin 14 x 18 feet, which we lived in for about three years.

During the summer of '37 Harold and I worked very hard clearing the land. It was a colossal job but slowly the farm began to shape up. Fred at age eleven, helped with what he could. We got Wilber Sterling to break the land for us. He worked for us three years on a crop share basis.

There was plenty of firewood near the house, so we chopped it down and bucked the logs into blocks with a swede saw. Later these blocks were split into useable sizes. This wood caused a great deal of creosote to form inside the stovepipes in a condensation of moisture and poisons. This would escape in a black fluid through the joints of the pipes and run down the outside of the pipes making quite an unsightly mess.

ADA BENNETT'S BREAD

I remember using potato yeast or everlasting yeast for bread making and it made excellent bread. The method is as follows:

The Starter: Boil potatoes and drain them, but retain the water they were boiled in. Then mash the potatoes fine and return the water to the mashed potatoes. Add a couple of teaspoons of sugar (honey or beet syrup served just as well). Set aside until lukewarm.

In the meantime a Royal Yeast Cake (about 2 inches square and one-half inch thick) was dissolved in a little tepid water. When the potato mixture was lukewarm the

yeast was added to this and left overnight to rise. By morning it was all bubbly and light, and there was enough to equal roughly 2 quarts.

Bread Making: One quart of "starter" was used to set the sponge in the evening. The sponge consisted of the starter, plus necessary salt, shortening, sugar and liquids. To this was added flour. This was then beaten vigorously with a large spoon and left until morning at which time sufficient flour was added and kneaded in, to complete the dough.

A housewife always retained a quart of starter. To this she added more potatoes (with their water) and a bit of sweetening. No more yeast cakes were needed as long as the starter was replenished in this manner and not allowed to go sour. If, during hot weather this happened, chances were that you could borrow a bit of starter from your neighbor to make more.

ADA BENNETT'S BEET SYRUP

To supplement our meagre sugar supply, I grew sugar beets. they were easy to grow and yielded heavily. When they were fully grown, the beets were picked and peeled well, then sliced very thin. These slices were then placed in a copper boiler, covered with water and boiled until tender (approximately one hour).

The juice from the beets was then carefully drained into a large granite dish which was placed back on the stove and boiled for a long time - until thick as molasses. During the later stage it had to be watched closely to keep it from sticking to the bottom of the pan. When it was ready, it was poured into jars to seal. This syrup kept well up to about a year. If kept much longer it would granulate to the consistency of demarara sugar. The pulp from the sugar beets was never discarded - it was excellent cow feed and the cattle loved it!



Fred's first attempt at farming - 7 years old.

CANDLE MAKING

Candle making was a common occurrence also. To do this a stick was suspended over an empty boiler. Using double strands of grocery string of suitable length, about six sets were suspended over the stick. The strands were

twisted and fastened to the stick.

The stick of strings was lifted and dipped into a deep container of tallow, then hung back over the boiler. In this way excess tallow dripped back into the boiler. When the tallow on the strings had hardened, they were again dipped into the slightly warm tallow. This was continued until the candles were about one inch in diameter. The candles provided some light, though sputtering was not unusual.

BARN BUILDING

We needed a barn on the farm, and as we had no money to build one, we improvised with what materials we had. We used the easily obtainable wooden railing from the nearby bush plus straw from the stack.

The walls were made by constructing two rail fences approximately two or three feet apart. Into this was stuffed old straw which was tamped down until the space was evenly and solidly filled. This was repeated for each wall with the corners being dovetailed and bound together. A layer of railings was placed across the top of the walls to form a roof. When the threshing was done, straw was blown right over the top of this to make a satisfactory and very warm shelter. Rough lumber boards were used for the door and this was held in place with leather hinges.

Fred and Alice both married and the Bennett's have eleven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren at the time of this writing. Harold and Ada retired from farming in 1957 and moved to Grande Prairie.

JACOB H. BERG

by Goldie (Berg) Cuthbertson

My mother, Mrs. J.H. Berg, sister Viola, brother Orville and I arrived in Wanham by train in November of 1927. Mrs. Alfreda Sieble travelled with us. My Dad, Jacob H. Berg, and Mrs. Sieble's husband, Isaack Sieble, had arrived in Peoria ahead of us. they brought all our possessions plus two cows my parents acquired at Blackfalds, where my Dad worked at threshing for W.J. Rottacker, my mother's brother.

I remember it being very cold when we arrived at Wanham. Mr. Sieble had lots of straw on the bottom of the sleigh and quilts, as well as hot rocks. Even so, my youngest brother nearly froze his feet. It was approximately 12 miles to Adolph Ziprick's place, where we were to spend the first part of the winter. Later on, dad bought a granary from Dan Reiswig. We moved into it and lived in Ziprick's yard for the rest of the winter.

There was no school at Peoria that winter so we had a great time. But there was work. My job was to haul snow for washing and drinking.

My dad had filed on a homestead about a mile from Dan Reiswig, so in the spring we moved our granary onto our homestead. Then the work began in earnest - clearing land! How well I remember it. We didn't have any money so we cleared 10 acres for Dan and also 10 acres of our own. In return, Dan 'broke' our 10 acres for us.

I remember one day we were out clearing on our 10 acres, when Dad spotted some bushes with red berries on them. He remembered how good the berries tasted in North Dakota and they looked just like these berries. So with great glee he started eating and before we could get any, he started spitting and sputtering and coughing. We didn't know what was happening! When he could talk he told us not to eat any because they tasted like soap. To this day, I still don't know the name of them, but we've had many a good laugh over this incident.

In 1928 the Mersey School was built across from Dan Reiswig's, so that fall we started school. Miss Nickle was our first teacher. My uncle, W.J. Rottacker had taken a quarter of land right beside ours. We cleared 40 acres of land for him in that year as well.

Going to and from school was fun because we took a shortcut across unclaimed land. There were so many dead-falls that we could walk on logs all the way to school without touching ground.

We had lots of fun in school too! Many of us were related and most of the same religion, so those were good days. In the summer we played ball and in winter we hunted rabbits at noon and recess. Sometimes in winter, after a big blizzard, we could walk all the way to school on big hard drifts.

We had a garden the first year we lived on our place and one day my brother Orville and I decided we wanted a carrot. Times were tough and we needed all the garden produce we could get. But being children, we didn't think of that right then. The carrots having only come up a short while ago hadn't matured yet. We would pull a carrot, then put it back into the ground because it was so small, and then try another - until mother caught us. We didn't care too much for the switching we got, but we never tried to pull carrots again and then put them back.



Home of Mr. and Mrs. Jake Berg in Peoria.

UPSTAIRS OF THE ONIONS

One day a school girl friend of mine who lived some distance away came over on an errand for her mother. She wanted some "upstairs of the onions". We were very puzzled as to what she meant until she showed us. She wanted the green part of the onion. She was German and

couldn't make herself understood too well in English.

When we moved to our place, Dad built a little lean-to on the side of the granary for a kitchen. Later, another lean-to was built along the back for bedrooms. Prior to that, we had our beds folded up against the walls during the day. So, after the additions we had ample space. We used straw ticks for mattresses.

The 10 acres Dan Reiswig broke for us, Dad seeded to oats. It was a beautiful crop. In the fall before it got ripe, a heavy snowfall came and flattened it all. Dad managed to get it into bundles by cutting it with a binder all one way. We children and mom had to put it into stooks. We used the sheaves to feed our cattle. There wasn't much money to speak of so the garden and cows had to supply most of our food. We didn't see sugar for months. We also had chickens which provided us with eggs.

Dad was a carpenter so started working for Dan Reiswig. George Reiswig had a sawmill and Dad worked there as well. W.J. Rottacker moved his sawmill from Blackfalds onto the quarter of land touching our south west corner. George Reiswig moved his mill to Wanham. Dad operated the steamer in the Rottacker mill. He didn't get paid much in cash those first years. We also went into the tall timber, cut logs and hauled them to the mill. the owner sawed them up and took half the lumber in payment. Thus we had building material.

After we had cleared enough land and started threshing the grain, things began to get better. I remember during the winter, Dad hauling grain to town with horses and a sleigh. Oats were 9¢ per bushel and \$5.00 was received for a load. This paid for a 100 pound sack of flour. When it was cold he walked behind the sleigh most of the way to keep warm. I felt so sorry for him many times.

One trip took all day, which was to the nearest elevator in Wanham.

HAILSTORM

I remember one night a few years after we moved to our place. We had quite a few acres in crop and it was beautiful. About midnight a terrible thunderstorm came up; it was so violent that we all woke up and congregated in the living room. The rain came down in sheets and then it started to hail. After it had passed, Dad



Sheep shearing on the Jake Berg farm - Herb Reichenback on the shears.



Mrs. Mary Hagel

went out to see what damage had been done. It was still raining and there was lots of lightning, so he could see. We could see him in his night clothes when the sky lit up and he returned to the house crying. The loss was almost 100% on a large portion of our wheat crop.

Another year Dad was away threshing for W.J. Rottacker, who owned only one threshing machine at that time. It was a Waterloo operated by a steamer (which Dad ran). There were eight to ten bundle racks working with the outfit. They would travel from place to place harvesting, sometimes gone for up to six weeks. The women and children left at home had the responsibility of the chores.

One day there was a great noise outside, so we ran out to investigate. It was a cyclone and were we frightened! It picked up lumber from our pile and sent boards flying, as well as uprooting a tree close to the house. We ran into a plowed field and lay down. After it passed, we saw the threshing crew coming from East Peoria. The cyclone had appeared to be headed in that direction, but it missed them.

We loved threshing time. Cooking for the men, and watching them work while taking out morning and afternoon lunches was always exciting. One Halloween, while threshing at W.J. Rottacker's, we decided to play a trick on the men. We set the table with bread mixing pans and ladles for spoons. Everyone had a funny combination of eating utensils. It was disappointing though, as the men did not appreciate our joke, so we had to reset the table properly.

Another year on Halloween, a bunch of us young people planned to play a few tricks. There weren't any treats in those days but the tricks were always fun. The problem was though, that someone decided it was a good idea to light a big straw stack on fire. The area was lit up bright as day, and it's pretty hard to trick when everyone can see what you are doing. It was a washout, but we had fun anyway.

FIRE

We had one narrow escape from fire. One of our neighbors was burning brush piles and the fire got away into the dead fall. The bush was so thick that we were not aware of the fire until it was right by our yard. We all jumped into action and managed to keep it away from

the buildings. Actually, the fire did us a great deal of good, as it burned a lot of logs that ordinarily we would have had to clear. One thing it did do though which was not appreciated, was burn up all the fallen logs that we had walked to school on.

NORMAN AND DON BERNER

by Don Berner

During the latter part of World War II, Norman flew over the Peace River country with the R.C.A.F. He had been indoctrinated, so to speak, by one of his superiors - Steve Galigan, who had bought Joe Ward's farm south of Belloy. Norman decided to move to the land of the mighty *Peace* and talked me into coming with him.

Norman purchased a 22 - 36 McCormick tractor, a breaking plow - tiller, and a Whippet car converted to a truck. Then he set up housekeeping in Joe Ward's old house on highway 49. When I got out of the army that spring of 1946, I immediately boarded the C.N.R. at Kelliher, Saskatchewan and started out on the longest journey I will ever take. I had been to Europe but didn't know the world went so far north or a train went so slow.

After hours and hours of bush - mostly burned, and the very odd acre field, we arrived in Belloy (in the bush). Norman was not there to greet me and even after that horrible train ride, I longed to see another train (going the other way). However, Jack Culshaw came to pick up the mail and asked me to come to their place for breakfast where Norman was installing eavetroughs. I later had Peggy Culshaw write down how she made pancakes and that was the start of twenty years of cooking for myself. It didn't always taste too good but kept me slim. We finally headed for the farm and it was a delightful surprise to see the open fields with no hills - sloughs, thistles or rocks.



Lars Solheim and Don Berner - ready for a dip in the dugout after a hard day of root picking - 1946.

CURLING SPUDS

The first thing I did was plant some potatoes. It was late and dry so I put some water in the holes and tamped them firmly, as I was taught at home. They never came

up. When I investigated a month later, I found lumps of clay about the shape, size and consistency of curling rocks. The potatoes were perfectly preserved.

My second task was to scrub the floor. I bought a hoe, boiler, scrubbing brush and four cans of lye. After about four treatments with hot water and lye, scraping it with a hoe into a shovel, I could see *almost* clear lumber where the tobacco juice had been. I have never really used tobacco but will always remember the smell of old tobacco juice.

We spent the summer doing custom breaking and piled brush by hand on the old Ward farm. It wasn't as bad as it sounds. John and Walter Kasprow, Lars Solheim and Dave Fortier worked with us. Then I went back to farm in Saskatchewan for two years.

In 1948 Norman asked me to come back and give him a hand in the fall. We spent much of the winter hauling pulpwood out of the Birch Hills and shoveling and plowing snow. We moved into Wilbur Sterling's house in Belloy and Norman set up a little blacksmith shop. I was a very important piece of equipment in the shop (power for the forge, which Norman had built from an old cream separator). My speed wasn't very consistent, which resulted in the odd ruined plow share and appropriate comments.

Norman talked me into taking up a homestead unit on the Lassiter project so that he could buy it later to add to his unit which was next to it. I bought some very wide rough lumber from Fergie and, with the help of Fred Lewis, Sr., built a 12 by 12 bin for my seed grain. When we finally got the seed, the boards had shrunk so much that it wouldn't hold oats. So I got some siding and gyproc and a couple windows and it became my house for the next ten years. It is still part of our house in 1980.



Norman Berner with his Whippet truck on Joe Ward's old farm - 1946.

in the N.A.R. bunkhouse in Belloy, will be found elsewhere in this book.

I have to mention some of the people who made our arrival and early years in the district very pleasant indeed. The Culshaws, Carl Hansens, Bodettes, Sinkevichs, Jakubowskis and many others but especially *Harry and Nellie Scott*. Their home was a home away from home for many a lonely young person. I will be forever grateful to them and their family for opening their doors to us. Also for their dedication to the community. Incidentally, this very afternoon I will be one of the pall bearers at Harry Scott's funeral. As I think of the past I realize, in spite of my intentions, how very inadequately I expressed my appreciation to so many good people who have helped me along this rocky road of life.

I must also mention Mr. and Mrs. *Halvor Sveinunggaard*. Halvor supplied the seed for my first crop and refused pay for it until the crop came off. He also loaned me the money for my first new truck, a 1952 Studebaker. He charged me eight dollars as interest.

These were just a few of the pioneers who made this a great place to live.

I had no intention of staying in the Peace River country, but hung around too long and the Peace bug got hold of me. Now 34 years later I have no regrets at all.

I was going to mention some of the hardships we went through, but I don't believe it would be fair not to mention the good things as well. That would take up too much space. Anyway, the good definitely outdid the bad and as the sign on our truck states, "*I am proud to be a Peace River Farmer.*"



Mr. and Mrs. Norman Berner.

Norman won the heart of a very nice Wanham girl and in 1952 he and Steffa Jakubowski were married. In 1954 Norman rejoined the airforce and I took over their farm. They finally settled in Rutland, B.C., where Norman opened a fix-it shop and continued doing what he had always done - fixing things for others.

At the ripe old age of forty, I finally tripped - and became a husband and father of two lovely little girls. It turned out to be the best trip of my life. The story of my wife's family - Alice Howard - who took her first breath

CLIFFORD BEST STORY

by Ruby Reiswig

Clifford Best, a farmer of Ontario, headed West with his wife and six children. Together with his two brothers, Keith and Eldon Best and family, they landed in West End, west of Rio Grande Store in November 1929. A log house was built during the mild winter and then Keith and Eldon helped build Clifford's house. It was a spruce structure, 24 by 26 feet, and had three bedrooms as well as living space. While they built it the family stayed in a house near Rio Grande, about 13 miles from their homestead, for about two months and then moved into the new home. In December 1931, another girl was born to the family, Beryl Rose. This brought a total of seven children to the family.



Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Best and family - 1939. Left to Right: Beryl, Ruby, Marion, Mrs. Best, Mr. Best, Carl, Harold, Don and Lyle.

Clifford kept on working around until the last part of 1935. The jobs were so hard to get that Eldon and Keith went to Peoria to see if they could find work, which they did. It was a real nice place they thought, so Eldon got horses and returned to West End to move his family to Peoria.

Then it was Clifford's turn to go to Peoria to see about a job. He did find work and so got two, four - horse teams and two sleighs equipped with grain tanks and winter cabs and used these to move his family to Peoria. The trip took two long days. He rented a house near the Peoria school and worked with R.G. Taylor for quite some time. During this time two of his daughters got married. On June 27, 1938, Ruby married Harold Reiswig and they operate a store in Peoria. November 22, 1938 saw Marion marry Albert Davis who farmed east of Peoria.

Clifford bought a house from Jack Redgrove and moved it down just east of Rottackers, across the line on a piece of land belonging to George Reiswig. He worked for Rottacker at the sawmill.

Son, Harold Best married Leola Fowler and they lived on a farm between Wanham and Belloy. Carl and Donald, other sons, were called away to the army. Later Donald married Emily Waye of Nova Scotia.

Clifford decided after a few years of working out that he wanted to go farming. He took up a two quarter homestead lease about eight miles from Peoria in the Smoky - Belloy area, and moved the house there. They lived there about two years and youngest daughter Beryl married Herb Middleton of Wanham.

In 1953, son Harold passed away and was laid to rest in the Belloy cemetery. His widowed wife later married Carl Best.

Lyle (a son) never married and lives with his parents. Clifford and his wife cleared and farmed all of their land except for forty acres on the home quarter. Later they sold the completely cleared quarter to Harold Reiswig and just farmed the one. Harold also purchased the second quarter from them when they bought a home in Grande Prairie, where they are semi-retired. They now rent the home quarter from Harold for as long as they

wish.

A list of Clifford's children and grandchildren:
Harold, who fathered Vernon, Leslie, Carmen.
Carl, who fathered Dawn Lucille, Martin, Elaine. Carl lives in Surrey, B.C. Wife Leola passed away on September 27, 1975.
Donald Best fathered Larry, Kenneth, Joan, Brenda, Todd and Wade.
Beryl mothered Judy, Marie, Wayne, Dwight, Elaine and Cynthia.
Lyle not married.
Ruby - one daughter - Marjorie.
Marion - three daughters - Joyce, Terry and Shirley.



Ruby Reiswig with her brother, Carl Best in front of the Peoria store.

HARRY BIHUN

by Jean Rycroft

Long before Bi-lingualism was the "in thing" in Canada, Harry Bihun had gone one step farther. He was tri-lingual; speaking Ukrainian, Polish and German fluently, and later adding English to his repertoire. Born in Ukraina, (later occupied by Austria) Harry travelled alone in 1912, at 15 years of age, to Canada.

"My parents didn't want me to leave them, saying they would never see me again, but a neighbour boy, who was already in Canada, sent me a suit of clothes, a ticket and \$25. The ticket was to Kindersley, Saskatchewan, where my friend was working on the railroad. I came all the way to Kindersley and when I landed there, my friend wasn't anywhere around. All there was, was an elevator and a railroad station. I was lost in a strange country, and couldn't speak the language to ask questions. In desperation I fell asleep on a bench in the station until a fellow woke me up. You know, he could talk German! He told me that the fellow who had sent me the ticket had moved."

"There was nothing for me to do but go to work on the extra gang on the railroad because I needed money. I also worked in sawmills in the winter, but that type of work was too heavy for me. I had a relative in Ethelbert, Manitoba and I spent the winter there. In the spring I got a job on the extra gang again. I got 20 cents an hour and worked a 10 hour day, so I got two dollars a day, which

was not bad money then. You could buy a lot with it. The best overalls then sold for \$1.75 - \$2.00, and good shoes for Sunday were \$4.00."

"During World War I, I worked in a Shell plant in Sault St. Marie, Ontario, for 35 cents an hour, plus a bonus, depending on how much steel we pulled up in one day. I usually made about 46 cents an hour."



Mr. and Mrs. Bihun and their first house on the homestead.

Harry returned to Ethelbert in 1918 and it was there that he met the love of his life; a young lady named Annie Noga, who was the niece of the people Harry stayed with.

Annie had come to Canada from the Ukraine in 1904, with her family, at the tender age of two.

About their courtship days Annie recalled: "There was no money to go to the show or anything like that. We went to dances, but only during the daytime in peoples' houses. There was no dancing at night except for weddings. People had to get home in time to milk the cows."

In spite of the fact that both Bihun's claim that when they went out "the men walked only with men and the women only with other women", Harry managed to propose to the girl of his choice and on July 16, 1918, Harry and Annie were wed in Ethelbert Catholic Church, with the blushing bride arrayed in a long white dress and veil.

About the honeymoon, Annie laughingly said, "We didn't know there was such a thing as a honeymoon — nobody talked about a honeymoon then."

"We settled down and tried to farm in Manitoba, but the soil was poor and it was very rocky. I had to go to work every summer and so Annie had to do most of the farming," recalled Harry.

A few years later, in 1921, the young couple's only child, a daughter, Mary, was born.

About this time all the papers in Manitoba came out with rave notices about the wonderful Peace River country, and many people from that area moved to the Peace.

The Bihuns held on for a few more years, but finally gave up on their poor land and Harry went to see the great promised land.

"John Noga, Joe Bilinski and myself all came up together in a Model-A car to see the country for ourselves. That was quite a trip. The brakes weren't too good on that old car and we just about couldn't hold it on the Peace River banks. We stopped at Pouce Coupe and a

fellow made us pancakes in the hub of a car. A settler took us in hand and made us welcome. We were going to settle there but we didn't because the bush was too heavy. We looked around and finally settled in the Codesa area."

Harry built a house while he was up here and then in the fall of 1930 he loaded up a boxcar, (four horses, three cattle, two pigs, 25 chickens and all their household furniture, a sleigh and a walking plough) and headed north. Annie and Mary travelled by coach, but Harry had to travel in the boxcar and tend to the cattle and feed and water all the livestock. It took three days to get here - the car had taken longer than the train.

Although Annie later grew to love the farm, her first impression was far from enthusiastic! "I didn't like it! I started to cry — it was all bush. It took four horses to pull the wagon through the mud, and our poor white horse was black — not with mud, with mosquitos. Then I got up the next morning and thought I saw someone's cattle outside, but there was no one around. Here they were, moose.! Was I ever scared."



Harry Bihun and his team.

"That first winter was nice though, even with only two women in there — Mrs. Bilinski had come in July, but all the rest were bachelors."

The Bihuns broke five acres the first year with a grub hoe, axe and a walking plough.

"It was heavy bush," said Annie.

"Timber," said Harry.

Annie planted a garden, raised chickens and milked a cow. They cleared 50 acres with an axe and a grub hoe by 1940.

"There was no water so first we used creek water and snow water in the winter. In 1930 there was no snow and they had to cut blocks of ice and pack them up the banks to water the stock," recalled daughter Mary.

"We never could get water in Codesa," continued Harry. "There were no wells — we all had dams and cisterns with water filtered in."

"The depression never did hurt us much as we never did have much to sell — eggs were 5 cents per dozen, five gallons of good, thick, sweet cream was 90 cents — then we didn't ship cream anymore. Next year it was up to \$1.50."

"We used to eat moose meat most of the time

anyway," said Mary with a twinkle. "Dad hunted."

"Still we didn't worry about that time. We were pretty happy. That same year a lot of people came from Quebec and we used to make dandelion wine. Every Saturday there was a dance. Then I played the violin and the neighbours all got together and danced. There was all kinds of moonshine and wine at the dances," laughed Harry. "We all had fun."

"People were very friendly and all helped one another," added Annie.

"We had no rugs in our house," she added with a smile, "but, that old board floor sure sparkled when we washed it with soap, water and ashes. We poured hot water on the ashes and it worked the same as lye — we sure had a clean floor."

"Grandmother Noga came and she used to spin the wool for sweaters, mitts and socks."

"We plastered our houses with mud," stated Harry, "which we kept fresh by whitewashing, but the French Canadians did it differently. They put moss between the logs to chink them and cored out logs and placed them on the roof."

"Mosquitoes were very bad, especially in wet summers. We used to make smudges and oil the horses to protect them from the insects. As we didn't want smoke from smudges in the house we put screens on the windows and kept the door closed all day."

"Dad used to cut all his hay with a scythe, then we hauled it home. I remember there were a lot of garter snakes in there and they all came out when the sun was shining." Mary recalled.

"We harvested our grain with a binder and horses. Axanty Melnyk bought a threshing machine and threshed for all the homesteaders. There was an elevator in Belloy where we hauled our grain," said Harry.

"Grandma and Grandpa Noga came to live with my uncle and while Grandma was here she delivered all the babies for the neighbours. She delivered Elsie (now Mrs. John Gordey of Sexsmith) and Adeline (now Mrs. Cas Wolozyn of Sexsmith) Bilinski, who lived right across the road from us. She also delivered Emily Melnyk and lots of others."

"They held school in the Catholic church in Codesa. Mary used to walk four and a half miles to school or ride horseback. There were quite a few French kids there as they had big families. The first teacher was Mrs. Lucas, who boarded at Gerard's. One of the Gerard children is now Mrs. George (Rose) McQuitty of Sexsmith. Mrs. Lucas encouraged a lot of the French speaking children to learn English."

"Bush fires often went through that area. Settlers weren't supposed to, but they set fires to get rid of the bush and then found that they couldn't control them — a lot of bush burned that way," recalled Harry.

In 1937, while visiting at the Nick Baduiks at Spirit River, Mary met a young farmer from the Buffalo Lake area. This was John Baduik, a nephew of Nick. This eligible bachelor must have made a big impression on Mary because on November 21, 1939, the young couple was married in the house on the farm by the parish priest and settled down on the groom's farm near Buffalo Lake.



Left to Right: John Noga, Bill Bihun, Annie Bihun and Pete Noga.

Ill health forced the Bihuns to retire to Grande Prairie in November, 1964, but they still have their land at Codesa. This keeps Annie content, as she and Mary can journey to the farm occasionally in the summer. They still have a bed, stove and dishes there for overnight visits.

If it was up to Annie, they would still be farming. "Harry moved to Grande Prairie — he very happy! I cry!"

Harry laughed and explained. "She thinks farm life is the best. She'd do the same thing over again still farming — but, she wouldn't work so hard. She can't forget the farm. One night after we retired she put her coat on and when I asked her where she was going, she said, "out to close the chickens in." She forgot she wasn't farming. She really liked farming — I don't! No more farming for me!"

Harry enjoys his apple and plum trees in the backyard and still sings in the church and they both enjoy babysitting the great-grandchildren.

One of the secrets of their happiness, they both agreed, has been togetherness. "Always do things together — wherever we went it was always together. Whenever we worked, it was always together, helping one another, unless somebody was not well. When I grubbed heavy brush, she was always there cutting the small stuff; she always grabbed an axe and worked beside me, helping me. Whenever we went somewhere we went together. Even Mary came to the fields with us and picked roots for a wrist watch," smiled Harry.

"Religion brings a family together and it's very good for the children because they go to church on Sunday, and stay with the family, and appreciate the parents more," added Annie.

The Bihuns both agree that, "Everybody should earn what they have; they appreciate it more and feel pride in it. We never took the relief — even during the depression. We earned what we had."

Harry also added with a twinkle, "Do what is suited to you. You will be more successful."

Harry has never regretted leaving the Ukraine.

"There if you were born poor, you die poor. There was no chance to get ahead, and it's 100 percent worse there now. Here, all you need is hard work to get ahead."

The Baduiks 5 children gave the Bihuns two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. John Baduik

passed away November 19, 1976, two days before the couple's 37th anniversary.

JOE BILINSKI

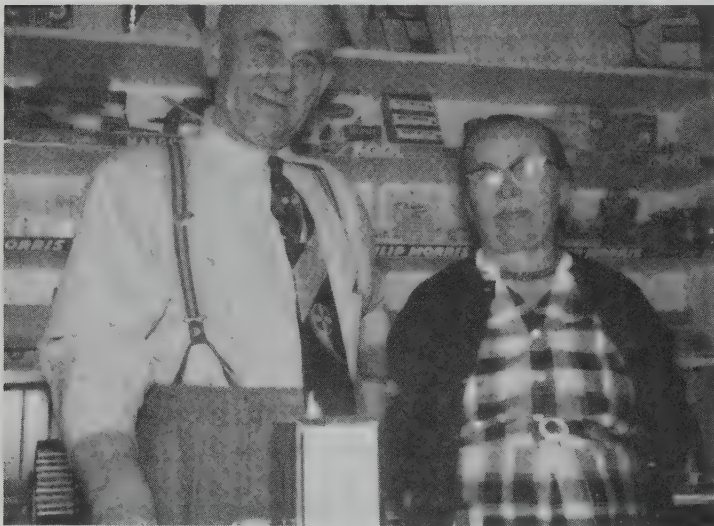
Joe Bilinski was born in Poland. He married his wife Francis on May 14, 1914. Mr. Bilinski immigrated to Canada from his native land in 1927. He first went to Dauphin, Manitoba, where he found various jobs. There he met Harry Bihun and John Noga who were all ready to make the long trip to the Peace country. They arrived in Codesa in the spring of 1930. Mrs. Bilinski came to Canada in 1929; then to Codesa in July of 1930. The Bilinski's first home was a cave-type dwelling on the banks of a river by their homestead north of Codesa. Later they built a regular house. The family lived on the farm north of Codesa until 1943, when Joe figured there was more money in carpentry than in farming. So he bundled up his wife and five children and on to Rycroft they went. Here he built a number of churches around the area, one in Rycroft and Greenway. He also helped build the first church in Codesa. The Round House which was used by the railroad was built by Joe; also the nuns' residence in Rycroft.

In 1945 Mrs. Bilinski purchased a quarter section of land 1/2 mile west of Codesa corner on the highway. They moved to that parcel of land in the spring of 1946. Joe drove a school bus with a team of horses to the old Fox Creek school. Later he bought a Ferguson tractor which he used to pull the bus.

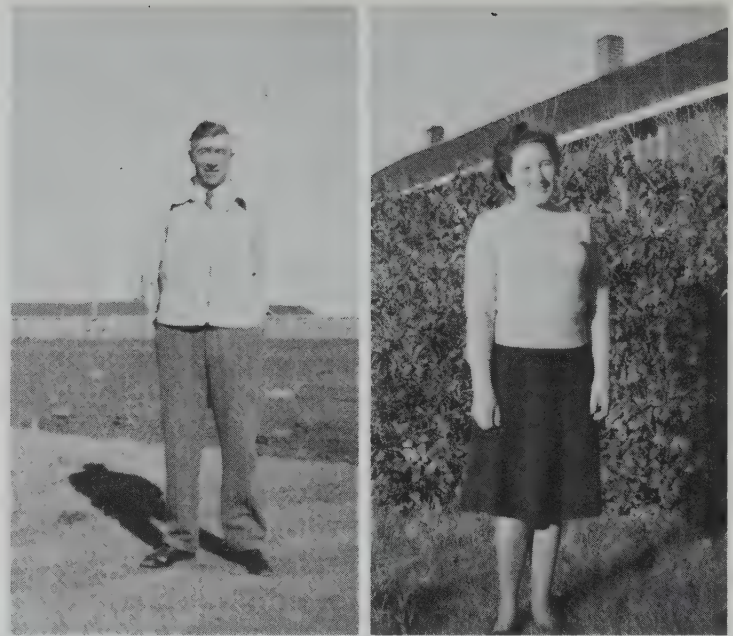
In 1951 Joe bought a cafe from Stan Carter. They operated the cafe until Joe's death in April of 1959.

The Bilinski's oldest son, John, resides in Grande Prairie; daughters Elsie and Adeline live in Sexsmith; daughter Josie lives in Spirit River; and son Tony lives with his mother.

Mrs. Bilinski still resides in Wanham and enjoys good health in her 87th year (at the time of this writing). She has, to her delight, 19 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.



Joe and Frances Bilinski in their cafe in Wanham.



Fred and Alice Birdsall, 1948.

FRED BIRDSALL

In the winter of 1927, I worked in a logging camp on the Wapiti River, where I met Paul Nagel. In the spring of 1928, we both went to Grande Prairie to work for farmers. Paul worked for Cooks near Grande Prairie and I got a job at Tom Corletts near Clairmont.

One day, Jim Munro, from Heart Valley, came to visit Tom and told us there were lots of homesteads open for filing. I phoned Paul to see if he was interested. We left the next day with Jim for Heart Valley. It was a two day trip, through bush, across the Bad Heart River. While travelling, Jim told us that the biggest drawback here was the lack of any rocks to build with. We later learned different. At the time we were passing McLeans' farm and the fence lines were full of rocks — which we could not see as the snow was deep.

We drove to the West Vale District where Jim lived, and stopped for lunch with Nobel Johnston. With Jim's help we found two quarter sections which we liked. One had a little more clearing on it than the other, so we tossed a coin and Paul won it. Paul filed on S.E. 25-76-4 and I filed S.E. 26-76-4. We stayed with Jim that night. Next morning Jim made us pancakes with flour, water and salt, as that was all he had. They were tough, but filling and welcome.

FREIGHT SHED PLANS

We walked fifteen miles to Wanham that day. The road was rutty and greasy, and to keep going we ate snow. We arrived about 2 p.m. and enquired about a train. Someone told us it would arrive about midnight. The railway station was a half mile north of Wanham, which had just one store, and no restaurants, so we bought a loaf of bread, a pound of butter, some cheese and a pound of tea. At the station, which was only a small freight shed, we found a can to boil water in. We

tried to get clean snow without too many rabbit droppings in it, to make tea. We built a fire outside, had our meal, then went into the shed and talked over plans for the future. That was the easiest part of proving up a homestead. We soon got tired of talking and went to sleep. About 9 p.m. the station master woke us up and told us we could not stay there. After a lot of explaining he agreed to let us stay until the freight train arrived.

We arrived back in Clairmont Sunday afternoon dirty and tired. After a bath and a night's sleep we went to the land office in Grande Prairie and bet the Government ten dollars that we could break thirty acres, put a fence around our land, build a house and live in it for six months a year for three years, (and we won!)

We worked all summer at our respective jobs and on Nov. 1, we started back to our homesteads. I had bought a team of horses with harness and borrowed a wagon from Tom Corlett. Having loaded our possessions we started out; had very little trouble on the road and made it in two days. We lived in an abandoned homesteader's shack until we could get one built. But first we had to build a barn for the horses and this we built on Paul's land. It didn't take long as we used logs and it was just big enough to walk into and back out. The door we made of split poles.

That fall and the spring of 1929 were warm, with very little snow. We got green logs out for a twelve by sixteen foot shack. We had to leave them behind until it chinked, to peel. By Christmas we had the shack built and moved into; also a well dug.

BED BREAD

We had trouble making bread while we lived in the abandoned shack, as it stood on open land. The wind blew through the logs so it soon cooled off when the fire went out. In those days to make bread one had to set a sponge over night. To keep it warm enough and rising, we put the kettle of sponge between us at night. We had good bread but just a little sour. We later learned to put a pinch of soda in it in the morning when we mixed it stiff.

THE LIFE

Paul was the cook and I did the dishes and cared for the horses. After supper we would lay on our bunk, the barn lantern between us hung on the wall, and we would read. Paul would say, "This is the life". We enjoyed every minute of it.

As soon as we were settled in Paul's shack, Paul went hunting for moose. We had lived on grouse and prairie chicken 'till then. I remember the first moose he shot; he bled it and then walked home. We had lunch and then went to skin it and cut it up; but then it was dark. There was no snow and we couldn't find our tracks out. I suggested we build a fire and wait until morning but Paul explained that if we could find an opening in the bush so he could see the stars, he could direct us home. Paul brought us home safe. That was my first experience using stars to direct my way home. The next day we got a couple of neighbours, Dave and Wilfred Parlee to help us

pack our meat. He shot a lot of moose that winter and kept us and our neighbours in meat. We often got invited out for supper which was a nice change. We built a shack on my land that winter but didn't finish the roof. As well, we got enough logs out and peeled for two horse barns to hold eight horses each. By spring we had to go back to work to get more money, so Paul went to work for *Jack Oatway* and I worked for *Lee Alward*.

GIRLS

In June, after seeding, we both got two weeks off to work on our homesteads. We went by train to Wanham, arriving at midnight. There was a dance on so we called in to see if we could get a ride to our shacks. We saw a man we knew who had a car but he had to take a girl home first. At that time we were not interested in girls. We walked the fifteen miles out and didn't get much sleep as we were anxious to get clearing. In that two weeks we cleared thirty acres and hired *John Gulick* to break for us.

THE FLOOR GOT SWEEPED

While we were clearing, Paul's dad and brother Carl came up from Ponoka. We gave them our bed and we slept on the floor. Mr. Nagel said it was the hardest bed he had ever slept on. When we constructed it we had no lumber so it was made of split poles and loose straw for a mattress. One had to lie still or the straw fell through to the floor. Every morning we swept the floor and put the straw back on the bed.

In September 1929, we had seven inches of snow. The leaves were still on the trees so it broke the limbs badly. The trail got filled in so that it took us three days to drive from Clairmont to our land. We had to stop and chop trees out of the road. The little sloughs were full of water and not frozen. Four times we had to unload the wagon and carry the contents to the other side, then pull the wagon across with a chain. We had too heavy a load and when we got to the bottom of the Bad Heart river bank we had to unload half the contents to get up the other side. Paul walked behind with a pole to put under the wheels when we had to stop going up the hill. He put the pole through the wheels as a brake going down. Of course we didn't have breaching harness. We were equipped for flat country.

When we arrived, Paul's brother, William, was there with two mattresses. We gave him the job of cook and trapper. He caught a lot of weasles but the price was low. A third brother, Henry Nagel, came up that fall and filed on a homestead as well.

There were the four of us together that winter. Paul and Henry did most of the building. We put up two hip roof barns and finished my shack. I did the hauling and there was lots of snow to contend with. I went almost every day to Reisswig's saw mill near Wanham. I picked up the boards as they were sawn. The boards were sixteen feet by twelve inches and we sawed them in two for the barn roofs. I got the slabs to put over the boards for shingles. I believe the barns still stand.

In April I went back to work for Lee Alward and bought a team for Paul and took them back, as Paul stayed on the homestead to put in our crops. We had four horses then and we bought a used seed drill, a disc and harrows. Henry and William went back to Ponoka, and Carl stayed with Paul. They worked hard and got a lot of clearing done. They also put up enough hay for the winter feed for our horses. The crops were good but the prices were low. We received twenty-five cents for wheat and less than a dime for oats per bushel. We did have lots of grain and straw for the horses. We hauled the wheat to Rycroft and traded it for flour. That was the beginning of the thirties and nobody had any money, but we did have some great times.

THINGS

People started making coffee out of roasted barley. I remember Jim Beange came from B.C. He brought cows with him and the first five gallon can of cream (which he skimmed by hand) he got 75¢ for. Later when he got a separator he received \$1.50 a can. To deliver, he had to haul sixteen miles. Your *time* was never counted in those days. The crops were good in the Peace River during the 1930's — which was different from the Prairies. Oats would run a 100 bushels per acre with no fertilizer, and wheat about 40 bushels. The land was new and fertile.

MOSQUITOES AND SISTER

In 1932, my sister Gladys came to Canada from England, to see what I was doing. She arrived in Wanham in June. I met her at the station with a team of horses and a high-wheeled wagon with a spring seat on it. At the time I did not think how she must have felt coming to those circumstances. She had lived in London, England, most of her adult life. She never complained and stuck it out for three months. The mosquitoes loved her thick English blood! Of course she went out of her way to kill them which was a sad mistake, as a hundred more came to each funeral. I have been back to England a few times and she still cannot believe there is any good in Canada.

In the spring of 1933, I was hauling oats to Wanham. They were very good seed oats and clean. I was receiving \$10 for a hundred bushels. I met a man who lived half-way to Wanham and he offered me \$12 if I would deliver. I hauled a load the next day, put it in his granary, fed my horses and had dinner. He then told me he had no money. I asked him to leave it with the storekeeper in Wanham when he got some. I guess he never had any to spare but I met him by chance two years later and was paid in full.

TASK FINISHED

Another time when I was hauling oats to *Woking*, a man wanted a few bushels to seed five acres of breaking. He also had no money but offered to work it out. He was a wonderful workman. He sharpened posts, did some

shingling and picked roots. Every job was done to perfection. The morning I was going to drive him home, he had to fit two small boards in the end of the building before he would consent to leave. I never saw him again but I wished him every success.

I had some pigs ready for market that year. John Gulick asked for two for breaking for me the next year. He bought four pigs for four acres of breaking. He charged five dollars an acre at that time. All one had to do was have oil and gas on hand and John would wait for the rest of the pay. He broke a lot of land in West Vale. In the fall of 1935 I went back to England. I arrived just before Christmas and stayed until April and returned home in time for seeding. *George Sayle* looked after my homestead for me. I was broke as we only grew feed in 1935, because it had rained so much. In 1936 the weather was perfect and wheat was up to a dollar per bushel. I sold two carloads of seed oats at 51 3/8 cents per bushel.

In 1937 I had Gus Dopher build a house for me. He was a good carpenter and charged \$1.50 a day. The years 1937 and 1938 were dry and the crops were light.

NO CHANGE

I remember driving to Grande Prairie with Red McLean. There was another man along who had moved up from the prairies. He said the weather looked like it did in 1930. He was afraid we were in for some dry years again. Red told him that we wouldn't stand for weather like that. We would do something about it!

In August of 1938 I married Alice, a young lady who had come to work in the district in 1937. She had one drawback. Her bread was not as light as it could have been. With George Sayle's and my know how, and her perserverance, she is hard to beat now!

LEONARD ERLE BLOIS

Leonard Erle Blois was born on Dec. 30, 1895 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was the youngest in a family of six children. His father came west in 1900, with his two eldest boys, and his mother. The rest of the family followed the next year. There was not school for the children to attend, so two years later, his mother took the children back east for education. Leonard went to school for six years and the family returned to the west in 1910, settling in Carstairs, Alberta. From here, Leonard had the opportunity to attend the Olds School of Agriculture.

The next few years were spent at various jobs. One being a cow puncher on the huge ranches in the foothills near Sundre. From this experience he has many tales to tell of tough times, and fun times alike. He also worked on a survey crew near Edson during this time.

HOMESTEAD SEARCH TO WAR FRONT

In 1916, Leonard, and his friend Charlie Walker, came to the Peace River country. their intentions were to file on a homestead, so they drove the whole B.C. and



The Blois family - 1950. Back Row, Left to Right: Jean, Gudrun and Leonard. Front Row: Allan, Harry and Bob.

Alberta 'Peace Block' with horses to look the land over. It was very dry till the end of June, but from that point on, it rained continuously for a month. So, giving up the prospect of farming for the time being, they went to Grande Prairie and enlisted in the army instead. They went to Calgary for training, and eventually found themselves at the war front.

After the war was over, Leonard went to B.C. and stayed with his brother Bert. For the next two years he worked in the lumber camps, and it was during this time he met Gudrun Lee. They were married in the year 1921.

Through the army, Leonard acquired a farm in the Carstairs area, and they farmed there till 1948. During this time, four children were born to Leonard and Gudrun. Though times were often very rough from depression, drought and hailstorms, Allan, Jean, Harry and Bob kept the Blois household pretty lively. The Second World War also interrupted their lives. From 1940-1945 Leonard was stationed in Calgary as Sergeant Major Instructor, and Gudrun and the children had to tend the farm.

LASSITER PROJECT

In 1948 they sold their farm in Carstairs and applied for land on the Lassiter Project in Belloy, to which they moved in 1949. Their close neighbors, Nordvies, McCoys, Bobiers and Johnstons arrived the following year. Those first years of getting established on the Project were difficult, with poor soil, poor machinery and not much money to work with. But with so many families all in the same boat, everyone was drawn together like one big family.

Leonard's sons all came north to farm also. Harry filed



Mrs. Blois and Bernie - 1952 Dig the hat!

on his homestead (non Project), just east of his Dad's in 1950, and farmed there till the time of his death in 1967. Allan and Bob filed on Project land in 1951. Allan farmed for several years, rented for several years and sold out in 1978, just before his death in March 1979. Bob has remained on his farm 7 miles north of Wanham. Daughter Jean, married Earl St.Claire from Didsbury, where they farmed for many years.

Leonard and Gudrun retired from active farming in 1974, and moved to the Pleasant View lodge in Spirit River in 1978.

Throughout the years Leonard has been a faithful Legion member, and an avid curler. Together Leonard and Gudrun have shared many years of married bliss. On March 4, 1979, they happily celebrated their 58th Wedding Anniversary.



Leonard and Gudrun Blois on their 50th Wedding Anniversary, March 4, 1971.

BLOIS, ALLAN

by Bernice Blois

Upon our arrival in 1952 in the "mighty Peace" country, the first and most vivid memory would have to be our sighting of the ferry at Watino. A semi-trailer truck had slipped half way off the ferry, which meant a lengthy wait before we could get across to the other side. With three tired little girls, the wait seemed even longer. The truck driver, much to his own dismay, could be seen swimming in the water, cowboy boots and all. We were much relieved to arrive at Mom and Dad Blois's, where we lived until Allan started working at Scott's Garage in Belloy. At that time, we moved into the old elevator house to live during the winter months, until our house on the farm was fixed up. During the spring and summer we lived in a granary on the N 1/2 19-78-1-16. Many hours of tedious work were spent trying to make the old house, which had belonged to Blacklocks, livable once again.



Left to Right: Allan, Bernie, Carol, Diane, Wendy and Doug, 1955.

HONEYMOON POT

Good times were plentiful in spite of hardships, such as crop failures. One of the highlights of entertainment was in 1955 when a group of friends went on a second honeymoon together. During the winter we would all throw our change into the "honeymoon pot!" Allan took an old truck, without license plates on it, up to Spirit River with a load of bottles on it to sell, in aid of the cause.

We took two cars and a huge tent belonging to George Wendlands', and the money took us as far as Prince George, B.C. A real good time was had by all.

In order to support his growing family, Allan did mechanical work for almost everyone at one time or another, and later operated Scott's Garage under the

name of Al's Country Service. He received payment for his services in meat and goods rather than money, at times.

In 1960, our youngest daughter was born, now bringing our family count to four girls and one boy.

During the winter, many evenings were spent with the bachelor neighbours coming over to play cards, and each Christmas Eve they were back for oyster stew. These times were enjoyed by all, as these men taught the kids the finer (?) points of playing cribbage.

We still feel that our best friends are in the Peace country - perhaps because we were all striving for the same goal, and no one had much more than their neighbours at the time.

Allan passed away on March 1st, 1979 at Didsbury, Alberta of cancer.

THE CARL BLONSKI FAMILY

by Dorris Rowe

Carl Blonski was born in Gardenton, Manitoba, on November 4, 1900. He came to the Peace River area in 1921. Several months later he bought a quarter section of land near Rycroft. Then he began clearing the bush, breaking the land and doing some farming.

Lena Lazoruk was born in Arbaka, Manitoba, on November 21, 1907. She came to Rycroft with her family in 1913 over the Edson Trail. It took them six weeks to make the journey from Edson to Rycroft in their covered wagon with a team of oxen pulling it. The first winter was spent in a tent.

Lena and Carl were married in February of 1925 and settled on Carl's farm until they sold it in 1935. Dorris was born on November 25, 1925, in the little farm house with Grandma Lazoruk acting as mid-wife.

For a short while Carl and Lena operated a used-and-new furniture store in Grande Prairie.

\$10 A MONTH

On May 2nd, 1936, Carl, Lena and Dorris moved to Wanham. They took over the store that Nick Badiuk had been operating. The building belonged to Hugh Gillies from Sexsmith. He charged \$10.00 per month rent. The building consisted of a small part in front that was the store, a large warehouse in the back that had a fair sized hole in the floor with water underneath, and five rooms upstairs that made up the living quarters.

The trip from Grande Prairie to Wanham was made by train because in May the roads were impassable - they were just mud with deep ruts! After stepping off the early morning train in Wanham the Blonskis saw more mud - mud everywhere! However, it did dry up and by the last day of June Carl was able to bring the car back from Grande Prairie. That 1929 Ford made many more trips between Wanham and Grande Prairie. It was a good day's drive to make the return trip in one day. Carl would leave at 6 a.m. - visit a few wholesale outlets to do his buying and return home by 9 p.m. if all went well. The trip was *always* postponed if there was the slightest indication of rain because the roads only had a thin layer of



General Store, Wanham - 1939. (Presently the Birch Hills Senior Centre).

gravel in some places and most of them were just dirt.

They brought their unsold furniture from the Grande Prairie store and slowly sold it along with the groceries and dry goods. There wasn't much of a market for furniture in Wanham in those days but Carl was able to make ends meet and pay the rent. Hugh Gillies had been dubious about renting the store to them because they might not be able to meet the monthly payments.

On May 20, 1937, the Blonskis added a baby boy to the family. Gerald was born in Grande Prairie Hospital and the faithful 1929 Model A Ford made still another trip to bring him home to Wanham!

A year later Carl and Lena bought a pool room next door that belonged to Mr. Sheedie. Mike Lazoruk remodelled it into a store with living quarters at the back. He did a good job at the going rate for carpenters 25¢ an hour.

In 1939 they bought the building they had rented previously and had it moved behind the original pool room. The store was now enlarged again and the building moved behind it was all living accommodations. It was bright, clean and spacious. There was even room for a real bathtub, although the water had to be heated on the coal and wood stove and poured into the tub. It sure beat scrunching oneself into a round laundry tub! Dorris and Gerald were able to have their own rooms for the first time. Gus Dopher was the carpenter this time. He charged 35¢ an hour, his brother helped him for 25¢ an hour.

LITTLE OLD LADY

All four of Blonskis have many fond memories of Wanham. Curling, badminton, hockey and softball were enjoyed by the family. Lena enjoyed the "Progressive Club" meetings and especially remembers the auction sales held by the club with George MacDonald acting as auctioneer.

Many good dances and parties were held in the community hall. Here is one of Lena's favorite stories:

A masquerade dance was being held in the hall. Mrs. Roy Cameron and a little old lady all dressed in a fancy black hat, black dress, black stockings and gloves came in. Mrs. Cameron paid 35¢ for her ticket and went in. The little lady dressed in black had a terrible time finding

a knotted handkerchief which she had hidden in her stocking. After finding it she had even more trouble untying the knot - finally using her teeth she managed to undo it.

By now there was quite a line up behind her but undaunted she proceeded to count out 35 individual pennies on the counter! She certainly had drawn a lot of attention to herself and shortly after she was seated on the bench, Carl decided he should have a dance with this mysterious woman. She accepted and after they'd made several rounds of the hall, Carl reported to Lena that this woman was a terrible dancer! Her knees seemed to knock together and she stepped on his toes innumerable times. Carl tried to engage the lady in conversation but she would not say a word. No one was able to guess who this person was.

At midnight when the masks were taken off, there stood Mr. Roy Cameron in his black ladies outfit! He should have been awarded an "Oscar" for best actor. The incident provided many laughs then and in later years as well.

Dorris received her R.N. in nursing in Medicine Hat and now lives in Edmonton.

Gerald went to McGill University for two years to study architecture; then decided to work and study on his own. He is now an architect and lives near Vancouver.

Carl died of a sudden heart attack in May, 1969, and Lena still lives in Edmonton. She will be moving to Naramata, B.C., in May of 1980.

She has six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren and many, many memories of life in the beautiful Peace River country.

BOBIERS

by Florence Bobier

April, 1950, we arrived in Egelsham via the N.A.R., from central Alberta; included were my mother, Mrs. Bertha Robb - 87 years of age, our three sons Richard, Stanley and Alfred and, myself. Our good neighbor Ole Emerson met the train and escorted us to his butcher-shop, where his wife, Ruth, had a fine hot breakfast ready. The temperature dropped during the night and we nearly froze walking the short distance from the station to his shop. That was our initiation and welcome to the Peace River country.

My husband, Edmund Bobier, had come on ahead with two box-cars of settlers effects. He was staying at Oscar Breton's and busy hauling our worldly possessions out eight miles to his homestead in the Fox Creek District. Later that day, Selmer Larson drove us out to his home close to the homestead, where we stayed for a few days till Selmer and Edmund finished hauling our things and put up stoves. We were loaded into the sleigh and Edmund drove us the mile to our future home. Then - to settle in; boxes piled to the ceiling! where to find what we needed??? meals to prepare, and water ... where?? no wells - no dugout, just piles of snow. Soon company began to arrive. How heart-warming to have neighbors drop in to welcome us to the area. Mrs. Beggs from across the fence (known as the Rousseau place) called;



Bobier House.

then Louise, Wesley, Minnie and Wellington Warner; Mable and Selmer Larson and family, Kaari Foss, Charlie Cefferies and others.

My husband had served with the Airforce in the second world war, and thus had his eye on some land of the Lassiter Project. Off to Spirit River we went to file on a half section in the Belloy District. A snare arose! In order to obtain this unit we had to live on it. After consideration we agreed to live there. Another move!

Edmund rode horseback to the project - ten long hard miles. With the help of our new neighbor Leonard Blois, he was able to get lumber for two granaries delivered to the N.E. corner of the unit. It was not easy, no roads and lots of sloughs full of water. Then he set to work to build the granaries, and while doing so, boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Blois, Saturday night came and one granary was completed while the other was still without shingles. Monday morning we packed the necessary things and moved to the granaries. Edmund by this time was one discouraged, dejected man, but with the family's arrival, it helped to cheer his spirits some.

Mrs. Blois took my mother to her house for a day or two, 'till we got things ship-shape. The kitchen, dining room and mother's bedroom were in one granary. The unshingled one served as bedroom for the boys and Edmund and myself. Any extra space was piled with boxes to the peak.

One night the rain came down - no shingles - the rain came in! In spite of raincoats over the beds, we still got wet. Preparing the land for seeding took up every moment of my husband's time, but somehow, he found time to shingle that granary. The Good Lord took care of us, gave us health and strength to carry on; provided our every need. Some crop and a good garden helped us through the first year.

It was the fourteenth of October that we finally moved into the log house, (we had contracted to have this house moved from the Fox Creek farm to the Unit). Andy McDaid was working for Pete Bloomert and dug the dugout for our water supply, and also the basement for the house. An early snow that fall was a real blessing. Melting snow provided water for the house, two horses and a colt, two cows and a calf.

HOME INTERIOR

Picture if you can, a 45 gallon drum beside the cook stove full of snow. A boiler and a washtub on the stove melting snow. Then try to make meals, dry mitts, socks and have clean, dry clothing for three boys going to school every morning.

WINTER DAYS

The boys had to be at Mr. Hoberg's corner by 7:45 each morning. They left in the dark and arrived home after dark during the winter months. Only the Grace of God got us through and kept us well those winter days. Hauling feed for stock and rustling wood, sawing it, splitting and carrying it in, kept everyone busy for long hours every day.

As for Christmas' - great and pleasant memories are still talked over when we get together for that occasion now. Richard shot his first prairie chicken the day before one Christmas. That provided the meat. Menu: Roast stuffed chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes, carrots, cabbage salad and cranberry sauce (berries being picked previous summer in Tardee's swamp - what a patch!).



Grandma Bobier's 70th Birthday. Sady, Will Featherstone, Wm. Ormiston, Maggie Bobier, Maggie (Ormiston) Laughlin, Jack Laughlin, Jacqueline, Aurora L, Ed Bobier, Norman Ormiston.

Very cold weather settled in about January 1, 1951. The boys could not get to school due to the deep snow and extreme temperatures. Time was spent doing chores, getting meals, stoking the fire and playing cards. About midnight, tired and sleepy, we would be off to bed with two quart sealers filled with hot water, to help warm the icy sheets.

Spring finally came, replacing the deep snow with sloughs full of water. Sloughs on the trail to school were nothing but water from field to field. What a blessing when the bus could come around and pick up the children at the corner.

The school bus had its problems too. Remember when the road near Mr. Nybakken's was flooded and large trees floated across? Bus driver, Stan Sather, had to stop



Wedding Anniversary - May 12, 1964. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Bobier, Richard, Stanley and Alfred.

and push one tree out of the way before he could proceed with the bus.

Bears were prevalent in those days. Some good bear stories have been told -- but those are better left to be told by the good story teller, Ben Gaboury, of Eaglesham.

One of the highlights of those early days was when Edmund bought the log barn north of the Peoria store, in June 1953 for \$75.00. It was Oct. 24, when he and 12 year old Richard finished hauling the lumber and logs home. Then the foundation was laid and - with my help the logs were put in place. When laying the last logs, I was helping by holding an iron pin while Edmund drove the wooden peg out of the log. My first finger on my right hand got in the way of the eight pound maul and did it get smashed. It was not funny! Fortunately I had some pain-killer pills which helped me get a little sleep that night. The next day Mr. Elhorn took me to Sexsmith to Dr. McCrum, who predicted I would have a stiff finger. But with perseverance and exercise, it healed up without stiffness - much to the doctor's surprise. The barn still stands and is in good condition.

My husband's failing health made us decide to sell the farm and move to Grande Prairie. After five years we moved to High Prairie where he died in 1974.

Bertha Robb, my mother, lived with us as long as she lived, moving with us to the Peace River area in 1950. Mother was a real blessing in our home - never was she thought of as a burden. Her grandchildren loved her and cherish her memory today. She knitted their socks and mittens, and as she had arthritis in her hands, liked to wash dishes as the hot water eased the pain. Mother was musical and in her younger years would play the organ at church services. It was always a real source of entertainment when visitors would come, for all to gather round the organ, and sing hymns to our hearts content.

Mother passed away Dec. 19, 1960 at Belloy and is laid to rest in the Pleasant View Cemetery in Eaglesham, Alberta.

Our kind and thoughtful neighbors were:
Leonard Blois family

Hugh Johnston and family
Clarence Nordvie and family
Ross McCoy and family
Emil Gruisie and family
Al Elhorn and family
Albert Nybakken and family
Bill Lunn and family
Don Berner
Norman Berner
Bert Weir
Bob Nuby
A. Sterling
Roger Bourhis
Ross Hunt
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hornby
Roland Couette and family
J. Shmyr and family
Lloyd Evenson and family
Mr. Culshaw and family
Bob Nunn and family
Mr. Tardee
Bud Dennis and family
Mr. Nugie and family
Hugh McPherson and family
Joe Ouellette and family
Lee Phillips and family

HISTORY OF EMIL, MARTIN AND ALIX BODE

by Mollie Murphy Tansem

Martin and Emil Bode came from Denmark to this area in 1914. They were both very fine men, special friends and neighbors to everyone. When we 'Murphys' came here in 1917, we stayed 3 days in Emil Bode's cabin ('till a floor of hewed logs was put in the small shack on Malanders, whose land my dad, Fred Murphy, had rented.)

Emil Bode used to go north every winter trapping, but mostly came home in the spring to farm his land.



Emil Bode



Standing, Left to Right: Mrs. F. Murphy, Martin Bode, Clifford Tansem, Millie Tansem, Cornelius Olson, Lusco Christensen, Nels Jacobsen, Art Tansem, Hans Mortenson, Richard Johnson. Seated: Louis Tansem, Sarah Jacobsen, Carl Erstad.

MURDER

We were terribly shocked and felt very bad in 1931 when the news came that Emil Bode and another man, Jean Olson, were found slain in their cabin up on the upper Thalon River area. An Eskimo, Teleruk, was blamed but later word got out it might have been a white man.

Martin farmed 3 quarters. Tom Mahan helped him at times. Martin always had a big garden. He liked gardening. He landscaped his place - planted several spruce and pine and a birch grove and some maples. His nephew, Charlie Hansen and step-brother, Niels Jacobsen, came from Denmark. They both worked for Martin at first; then worked for others. When Niels married Sarah they opened the first cafe in Wanham. Martin married Alix in 1927. She was a very good cook. Their hospitality was well known for miles. Nearly every Sunday their house was filled with friends and neighbors. All agreed they'd never eaten such great meals as Alix Bode's.

MARKET GARDNER

Early in 1933, Alix and Martin rented their land to Cliff and Mollie (me) Tansem and went north. They built a large scow at Dunvegan. Their last load of household effects was taken from the farm on May 5th, 1933. They went to Great Bear Lake first, and later to Yellowknife, in 1939. Martin worked in the mines first and Alix had jobs cooking. Later Martin built a green house and had a big market garden some miles from Yellowknife. He had to have several boat loads of black soil for the garden. He supplied the stores and cafes and people with vegetables.

Martin came out to visit all his friends every few years. His last trip was in 1959. He sold his land. He passed away in the early sixties. His wife Alix, cooked for many

more years. She retired and lives with her son Jack and family, at Thunder Bay, Ont. (Jack was born Nov. 8, 1939 in Edmonton).



Left to Right: Alice and Martin Bode, their son, Jack, and a friend in Yellowknife.

HISTORY OF THE RUDOLF AND ERNEST BOETTCHER AND FRANK AND BERNARD GRAUMAN FAMILIES

by Ben Boettcher

The histories of these families must be considered together because their association began in the early 1920's in a village in north eastern Germany and ultimately culminated in two Boettcher girls, Ida and Emilie marrying Bernard and Frank Grauman respectively, in a double wedding in Peoria on November 14, 1929.

After carefully studying the freedoms and opportunities available in Canada, a group of young men comprising of Rudolf and Ernest Boettcher, Bernard and Frank Grauman, F.W. Schulze along with brothers Herman and Fred, August Schrupke, and others decided to leave their native Germany and emigrate to Canada. Bernard and Frank Grauman arrived in Manitoba in June, 1927, followed by their girl friends, Ida and Emilie, in September of the same year. Rudolf Ernest Boettcher arrived in Beiseker, Alberta, in March, 1928. The rest of the group arrived at the same time in Canada and worked at various points across the prairies for the next three years.

The lure of available homestead land and the promise of a place of their own was strong, so inevitably the eyes of these young men turned north. Through the auspices of Willy Moritz, Adolf and Oscar Ziprick and the Bergs, this group, in time, gravitated to the east-Peoria or Smoky District as it was also called.

The first "navigable" trail which followed an old cutline was slashed out in March of 1929 by Woody and Ivan Prosser, August and Gus Bohnke and Frank Grauman. The land, at that time, was still unsurveyed.

One of the more "memorable walks" was related by R. Boettcher who, along with Frank Grauman in April of 1929, walked for seven hours in knee deep snow from

Peoria to the Smoky District arriving at 11 p.m. at the tent of Gus Bohnke which was pitched under a spruce tree close to the banks of the Smoky River. This was their official first introduction to the new home that was to be theirs.

May, 1929, also saw Mr. and Mrs. August Boettcher, parents of Ernest and Rudolf arrive. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Grauman Sr., parents of Bernard and Frank, arrived in 1930. Due to the age of these senior individuals and the tremendous cultural shock they experienced, they found the move rather traumatic.

Although the language was strange and the money scarce, hopes were high that this would be the land of promise. Then the depression struck! Wheat fell to 22¢ a bushel and very shortly there wasn't even enough money to buy postage stamps. Potatoes and moose meat were the staples of diet along with milk and butter. Chickens were fed cranberries in a desperate effort to keep them alive and they thrived on them and commenced laying. Mosquitoes were a plague and brush and grass fires were a constant menace. As far as roads were concerned, there was only one mudhole between the Peoria and Smoky Districts and it was twelve miles long!

Rudolf Boettcher married Wilma Kussman of Millet in 1938 and their honeymoon was a gruelling three day trip north in a 1927 Dodge car whose motor perennially sounded like it harbored a flock of woodpeckers. The prudent top speed was in the neighborhood of 25 m.p.h. Son, Ben, married to the former Patricia Rawlek of Spirit River, was born in 1942 and also lives in the district.

Ernest Boettcher married Emilie Peddy in 1931. Two sons were born to them; Harry in 1932, and Edgar in 1937. Harry met a tragic accidental death in McBride in 1967. Edgar Boettcher, wife Karen Reiswig, and girls reside in Lacombe.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Grauman still reside in the district as does one daughter, Mrs. Evelyn Rottacker, born in 1933. The other daughter, Mrs. Eleanor Wade, born in 1931, resides in Grovedale, Alberta.

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Grauman have lived in retirement in Warburg, Alberta, since 1972. Though in their 80's, they enjoy good health and travel extensively. Their foster son, Peter Fritz and family, reside in Kamloops, B.C.

In looking back over the past half century these families have often expressed contentment with their lot in life in spite of the many inherent difficulties that they experienced in their early years in the "new land". They came not seeking a fortune, but rather liberty and independence and in this they have been satisfied.

LIFE OF THE BOHNKE FAMILY

by Martha Davis

My father, Freidrich August Bohnke born in Germany, raised a devout Lutheran who trusted implicitly in God, with Mina our mother, and Emma, Annie and Fred, their three children, and mother's brother Gottfred decided to immigrate to Canada in 1910. They settled in Loyalist, Alberta, lived there 15 years. Here were added to the family Gustov, Arthur, Emil, August, Bertha, Martha and Frieda. We had a house fire here, which destroyed all



Father and Mother in 1925.

the lovely things that were brought over from Germany, not a thing remained. But, the family was safe - for which my parents were ever so thankful.

Drought conditions encouraged father to make the move to Cluny. Conditions were no better, so we moved to Okotoks, where we stayed three years. Ernie was born there.

Then father heard of the Peace River country where homesteads could be taken - a land of plenty; good timber, grass - waist high, moose, deer and fur animals. Homesteading looked good to him, although it meant hard work. He was not old and was strong, and with fine, willing boys to help, decided to make the move in the spring of 1929. Soon everything was in readiness. He purchased a settlers car and another one for cattle, all was loaded and the journey began. Arthur drove the Model-T Ford with Mother, Martha, Frieda, Ernie and myself (Bertha) as far as Leduc. There we left the car with friends and Arthur went on. Mother and the children waited a few days for the two freight cars to catch up. Fred was working out this spring so couldn't help us move.

DESTINATION

It was a beautiful, bright morning when we stepped from the train. Father, brothers and uncle met us. The freight arrived the night before so the cattle were in the stock yards already and the other car was being unloaded. Wagons were set together and loaded. Soon the trip from Wanham to Peoria was underway. Emil and August mounted a couple of horses and drove the cattle along. Travelling was slow, the road was rough with deep ruts, and the loads were heavy and piled high.

Mother's sewing machine was placed on top but was not fastened securely. When the wagon hit a deep rut it fell off. Of course it broke but father was able to later fix it. We did not always ride on the wagon. Often we walked. Being fond of the out doors as children are, we found this new place to be very exciting. The drive to Peoria took several hours. Once there we stayed in a granary. Family worship was customary at our home and

that night many thanks went up for the way we were led and protected.

After a few days we had all our belongings moved on the place which later belonged to August Schruptky. Father also had a quarter section on the Smoky flat which later was Arthur's. Then father and Gust started scouting around for other land and found some in West Vale. Father filed on SE 31-T 76-R 3-W6, and Fred, Gust and uncle Gottfried filed on quarters along the township line. A shack (which later was the blacksmith shop) was built and corrals made for the cattle. Then the move to the homestead. Father set up his blacksmith shop in the open. As he was the only blacksmith in the country he always had lots of custom work. People brought work to him from miles around.

The clearing in those days was done by hand; horses were used to pull stumps and heavy logs. Fred went to work for Hermann Schriber who paid him by doing breaking in return. 'Work for work' was often the rule in those pioneer days. In 1933 father decided to purchase a crossmounted Case for breaking, which Fred and Gust handled. Next was the Wallace tractor and later the Massey. My brothers were the mechanics and later purchased a newer tractor - Model 25 Massey. A threshing machine was also purchased - it was old but it worked alright. All the other farm work was done by horses. Father was kept busy in the shop, so the farming was done mostly by the rest of the family while he supervised.

In 1930 Gust and Arthur went to Leduc to get the Model-T Ford. Father had bought this car new before we left Loyalist. The roads were not fit for cars to travel on but the car was handy anyway.

Annie and Alex were married while we were in Okotoks and they, with their baby girl Hazel, moved to the Peace River in 1930, settling by Fred's place on the township line. Emma and Ray were also married while we were in Okotoks and moved north to join us in 1931. They settled on a homestead south of the Kadot Lake.



Mother Bohnke with her spinning wheel - balls of yarn lying on the ground.

In 1931 logs were cut and hauled home and a large log house took shape. The house wasn't finished right away, but we needed the space so we moved in.



Log House - Ernie, Bertha, Freda, Martha with bear cubs.

There was a bush fire about this time, the whole country was on fire and everyone available was out fighting fire. It burned through a lot of good timber. My brothers were building a small sawmill now and they got this fire-killed timber to cut into lumber, which we were in need of then. Later they improved the sawmill and set up camp south of the Kadot Lake in the timber. They also did their own planing. There were often as many as ten to sixteen men in the crew. I was the cook for two winters.

Those early pioneer days during the thirties were hard years. Work was often exchanged for work - or something else; but there were some things work could not buy. Sometimes we needed cash but we always had clothes to wear and we never went hungry. Father was a good provider.

MARTHA REMEMBERS

Our mother worked right alongside Dad. She butchered meat, spun wool and she even knitted sweaters and socks which were sold at Sanbourne's sawmill. The family also made little hand-sleighs and sold them for 25¢ each, to children at the nearby school. Each child had his or her special chore to do. Martha remembers that she worked outside with her mother while sister Bertha did the housework. While Bertha and Martha were still quite young, they often had to herd cattle. One time the cattle got away from the girls and ended up at Mumby's place - over a mile away. Martha also remembers riding horseback to her brother Art's (at the Smoky) after dark. The road was only a wagon trail and the ride was quite an ordeal. She stayed overnight and went home the next day.

Along with the other animals we always had chickens, ducks, and geese. Our herd of sheep provided us with lots of wool and mutton. Mother was an excellent spinner. Often she would spin and knit from early morning till late at night to supply the needs of family and friends. She spun the thinnest yarn for stockings and nice dressy sweaters; heavier yarn was used for socks, mitts and heavy sweaters. Not only were we taught to do the work around the farm and house but were also taught to handle the spinning wheel and help Mother with the knitting. Mother sold dozens and dozens of socks and

mitts to Mrs. Archibald in the Belloy General Store. We received payment in groceries, etc. I still have the spinning wheel Father made in 1930.

We spent the first winter in the shack, then Father built onto it and it became the blacksmith shop when we moved into the log house.

ROPING TEACHERS

When we settled on the homestead plans were underway to build a school on the "school section". Father was very thankful, now his family would be able to have the education he wanted so much for each of us. It was a happy day when the West Vale school opened. Twenty pupils enrolled, and Alice Hawkinson was our first teacher. We all loved her because she was so kind and understanding. Miss Hamilton came next, and she was well loved too - she was a great sport. One incident that stands out was when Emil, August and Isaac were playing with a rope. Emil threw the larriet over the teacher in her chair and tied her there; she was so overcome with laughter she couldn't do a thing. When it came time for the bell to ring she asked to be untied and they promptly obeyed. That was the most exciting recess I can remember.

We all loved good, whole wheat bread and as we had nice No. 1 wheat, Father decided to get a hand grinder and grind our own flour. When he realized how much work was involved to grind by hand, he decided to build a water wheel, which worked just fine - except for the winter with all the water freezing up. So when the flour mill in Sexsmith started up, he took a load of wheat there which lasted all winter. We always had a large garden, and grew all kinds of vegetables. Our favorite was peas.

BREAD - CREAM - CHOKECHERRY JAM

Some years when the wild strawberries were big Mother would take the younger members of the family and pick pails of them. It would amaze me how she could fill two water pails while the rest of us only had half as much. When the fire had gone through it left conditions which allowed the fruit to grow larger. When the saskatoons ripened, Mother would again take us out. They were easy to pick and we had fun. We also went out to pick wild raspberries and cranberries. We used the cranberries to make juice. And I shall never forget the delicious chokecherry jam Mother made. We ate it on whole-wheat bread with cream.

We often travelled from West Vale to Arthur's place at the Smoky. There was always something to haul one way or the other. The road was usually rough, especially through the bush. One particular day Annie and I went. We got about half way there when the left back wheel broke. There was nothing to do but go back home. We had one young horse (never ridden before) and an older one. Annie jumped on the young animal and I rode the older one. Annie was a bit nervous but the horse didn't fuss much with the harness on. We rode right along. We got the wheel and help to put it on. Had no trouble after



Mr. and Mrs. August Bohnke, Sr. Golden Wedding Anniversary - Emil, August, Emma, Fred, Arthur, Gus, Annie, Freda and Martha.

that. Often along the way, we would see deer, moose and bear.

Pioneering was not all work, we had good times too. Often we went swimming in the large ponds of the creek. There were ball games at the school and in winter we could skate on the ponds and on Pete Jensen's slough. My brothers made some skis and sleds. On these we passed much time in hilarious laughter. Mother played the mouth organ and Father played the cornet in the evening, while our dog would sit and accompany them with a howl. Arthur and August played the mouth organ and Jews Harp.

For health reasons Father and Mother moved to Kelowna in 1940. When the war broke out Emil and August offered their services in the Royal Canadian Air Force. It was a happy day when they returned, never to go back. In the summer of 1948 August was stricken with Polio, in a few days passing to his rest. Years later in 1961 Mother suffered a heart attack and passed to her rest. In 1966 Annie was taken from us in a car accident. Father had different ailments which took him in 1972. Arthur died in 1973, Emil in 1974 and Ray Metheney in 1975. Though some members of our family are no longer with us, those who remain have happy memories which we shall all cherish as long as we live.

THE BOISVERT FAMILY

by Mrs. Agnes Boisvert

Noel and I arrived at Wanham in May, 1946, with our first born (Louise) nine months old. We walked up town to eat dinner and met Octave Prevost. Noel had previously relieved the station agent there. Octave had just returned from the hospital where Donna Mae had made her debut into the world. People were very friendly and we soon had many friends.

There were many hardships and I suppose that we were pioneers of a sort. Water was a problem. Having grown up at Pickardville myself, where wells were the water source, I couldn't understand the reason for absolutely no water. My dad had a machine for this purpose and bored wells around that part of the country. The N.A.R.



Left to Right: Janice Bennett, Betty Wells, Emily Boisvert, Donna May Prevost, Louise Boisvert, Joan Zmean, Roger Boisvert, Patsy Boisvert, Aline Prevost.

had a huge tank immersed into the ground along the track for the section foreman. The train crew would fill it once a month with water from the tank at Watino, which was pumped from the Big Smoky. We were able to have a pail for drinking purposes only; the rest was from rain or snow. If there was no rain in summer, Noel would take cans and visit a dugout, enabling me to do the wash. In winter I melted snow. Several years later the N.A.R. installed a tank in the ground for us, which was a great luxury.

Christmas was as exciting time. Noel and Stewart Bennett usually went out to the bush to select our trees. The Christmas concert sponsored by the school was a great event to look forward to and I would spend hours sewing new dresses for the girls on my treadle sewing machine. The teachers put a great deal of work into costumes, and the parents were delighted with the recitations, songs and plays, which also took a great deal of preparation. A huge tree stood near the stage and the appearance of Santa was enjoyed by all.

I would help Mrs. Zmean and Mrs. Mac Sweeny prepare a concert at our church. We taught the children songs and there was always 'The Christmas Story'. Our daughter Emilie was Mary one year, Paul Leriger was Joseph. Emilie's very precious life-like doll was Baby Jesus. She will always remember that event. Santa visited there as well. We all enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the C.W.L. and the mothers of the parish.

Each summer I would take our children and travel by train to visit my folks at Pickardville and Manola. How excited they were, two in the upper berth and two in the lower berth with me. When my father passed away, the only compartment available was in a coach reserved for a regiment of R.C.A.F. men. Roger was a baby then, and I heard the conductor give strict orders to them to stay clear of those berths, as a young mother was in there with her children.

NOEL BOISVERT

I arrived in Wanham on May 26, 1946, with my wife Agnes and baby daughter Louise, to take charge of the

Railway station. The following years saw new arrivals in our family, namely Emilie, Patsy and Roger. I had worked at Wanham for short periods in September, 1943, and again in March, 1944. The people and countryside had impressed me and when the position became available in May, 1946, I did not hesitate to accept.

While relieving Ernie Trump in 1943, the first person I met was Mr. Lawrence Leriger who at the time was hauling mail and express. Both he and his wife were very kind to me and I enjoyed many meals with them.

Another person was Emil Bolduc who told me of all the wild game the Birch Hills contained and shared his stories of the exploits of the early pioneers, of whom his dad was one. He told me of the R.C.M.P. horse patrol in those days. The dogs would bark when he was a half mile away all wrapped in his buffalo coat sitting high on his horse. He was out seeking moonshine stills just southeast of the village of Wanham. Several years ago, while living in Peace River, I attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting and the guest speaker was the retired Staff Sgt. Rivers, who was the constable at that time seeking moonshine. I couldn't resist making it a point to bump into him after he had finished his speech to tell him I had worked in Wanham for 13 years and knew many of the old-timers of his day. I named a few and he grinned.



Left to Right: Albert Leriger, Noel Boisvert, Howard Zmean.

DOLL CARRIAGE BEARS

I remember returning home from an operation in Grande Prairie, with Olga and Frank Podruzny. Olga had her new baby and the nurses kidded me about not bringing one for myself. However, when I returned home there were three baby bears curled up in a doll carriage and half of the country calling to visit them! Each morning there was no need for an alarm clock, the cubs would awaken and Noel would rise from his bed, feed them their formula of water, honey and Carnation Milk. They slept most of the time, but as they grew older they only took short naps and roamed the house, chewing on the house plants and running after Roger and Patsy who were not yet of school age. We kept them for a month, then made arrangements at the Calgary Zoo and sent them there.

When Louise, our eldest child, started school there were no school buses. She had to walk; usually Lillian Jacobsen kept an eye on her. In the winter we made sure that she was wrapped up warmly. One day it was blowing



Left to Right: Terry Leriger, Adelaide Zmean, Elsie Waters, Agnes Boisvert.

snow and bitter cold. I went to meet her near the R.C. Church - a huge gas truck was coming; he couldn't see little Louise, and I was able to grab her out of the way just in time.

The saddest part of our railroad days, while living in Wanham, was when Mr. Tom Parlee's car was hit by a freight train on the crossing and he died enroute to the hospital.

The Bennetts were close friends to us and when the twins were born - Stewart brought me the happy news, but I wouldn't believe him; however he *wasn't* kidding, as he so often did!

When the whooping cough epidemic struck our tiny village, our three youngest children came down with it. Our oldest child had been immunized against this dreaded disease. She was fortunate. I didn't dare close my eyes at night for fear that one of them would choke to death. Audrey, our district nurse, helped us through this ordeal.

EMIL BOLDUC

In the spring of 1916, I moved into the area with my parents. I was nine years old at the time. We pulled into Wanham on the train and were met by Ed Prevost. He



Emile, Gloria, Raymond and Maurice.

took us to Herman Thorin's place. I remember the water was so deep in some of the mud holes that it got into the double decker wagon box. As I recall, all that was in Wanham then was a little general store owned by Pete Tansem. We stayed at Herman Thorin's in a tent most of the summer until our log cabin was built.

We attended school at the old Steele School. We used to wait at the road for the Prevost boys and girls, and then we'd all walk to school together. I remember it was so cold in the winter that all the kids had to stand around the old barrel heater to keep warm.

My parents started clearing some land the following spring but it was slow going. Every so often my father would have to go out to work to make a little money; then he would come home and we'd clear a little more. Gradually we started farming, growing wheat and oats; as I got older I took the farm over myself. There were lots of moose in the area then and everyone put in a big garden, so there was always plenty to eat.

In 1939 I married Yvonne Monnette and we had four children. During the summer I maintained the roads around Wanham, Belloy, Peoria and Badheart. I did this for eleven years.

In the fall of 1963 I sold the farm to Bill Sallis and moved to Grande Prairie, where I worked for the forestry for seven years before retiring.

Our eldest son, Maurice, married Juliana Eymundson. They live in Flatbush and have three children. He is a shooter on seismic rigs.

Our next son, Raymond, married Dorothy Heikel. They live in Grande Prairie and have two children. He is a foreman for North Canadian Forest.

Our youngest son, Roland lives in Edmonton. He is a driller on oil rigs.

Daughter Gloria, married Gilbert Jones. They live in Kennewick, Washington and have two children. They have their own business remodeling and building service stations.



Yvonne and Emile Bolduc with grandchildren.

ERLING AND SVERRE BORSETH

by Lily Sather

The Borseth brothers came from Christiansund N., a city on the mid-west coast of Norway, in the 1920's. This same city sustained the most damage during the German invasion in World War II. At one time alone there were



*Sverre, Angela
and Erling
Borseth.*

800 buildings on fire.

Erling came to Canada in 1925. He went directly to his Aunt and Uncle, Ellen and Peter Myrland who at that time lived at Blackfalds, Alberta. When Pete came to the Peace River country, Erling came along, and filed on his homestead (SE 34-76-3-6). Pete helped him build a house on his land and soon Erling was on his own. He farmed for several years, then sold his land to Fred Bennett and purchased other land north of Wanham. He moved into town and for awhile continued to farm. He sold this land and was then employed by the Dept. of Highways.

Sverre came to Canada in 1927 and lived with his uncle and aunt, the Edward Sathers at Blackfalds. When they came to Wanham, he came too and filed on a quarter section (SW 3-77-3-6) cornering his uncle's farm. Sverre farmed for a few years but was never a farmer at heart. He sold his land to the Sathers. He married Angela Girard of Eaglesham (Mrs. Bill Lee's sister) in the early 40's. He spent time in the army and after the war worked in southern Alberta hotels for a time. Then he and Angela moved to Vancouver where he obtained employment at the Army and Navy Club. He lost Angela in June 1962, and passed away himself in Nov. 1974. Erling joined them just eight months later.

THE KEN BOTHAM FAMILY ON THE LASSITER PROJECT

by Dot Brissard (nee Botham)

In August 1946 the Alberta Government negotiated with O.B. Lassiter, a large scale farmer from the southern part of the province, to clear 100,000 acres of land in the Peace River area of northern Alberta. Lassiter Ltd. was to undertake the giant clearing project assisted by a loan from the Treasury Branch. This land was to be made available to war veterans. Each veteran was to be eligible for one half section of land and would be issued a twenty year lease stating that one third of the crop would be delivered to the grain elevator in the name of the

Department of Lands and Forests for seven years, then one-eighth crop share for the remainder of the twenty year lease. After fully cropping his land and putting in the required residence of six months the veteran was to receive his title to the land.

By November 1946, Mr. Lassiter, an energetic individual had his crew assembled. Mr. Al Elhorn, who still resides on the project land, was a foreman and welder on the Lassiter crew. Bunkhouses and a repair shop were built in Wanham, the district where the clearing project would begin. Fifteen American war surplus D-8 Caterpillar tractors and four seven-bottom disc breaking plows were part of the equipment to be used.

Before work would begin on the land clearing project northeast of Wanham, an eleven mile road had to be built by Lassiter. Part of this road had to be made through the Burnt River Valley, deep, rugged terrain where considerable work had to be done to build a suitable road for vehicles.

By August 1947 the Government announced that thirty-five half sections of land were practically ready for occupation. These units were drawn for out of a box by Mr. J. Harper Prowse, M.L.A. and Leader of the Liberal party as army representative. The 'Project' was becoming a reality. Veterans came from many different backgrounds and places to try to make their fortune at homesteading. Smaller contracts were eventually let out for the land clearing and breaking, and one that I was most familiar with was part of the Simonson Project north of Belloy.



Disc-plowing land on Lassiter Project.

Charles Kenneth Botham, my late husband, was born in Toledo, Ontario in 1918. He enlisted in the R.C.A.F. in 1941 in Ottawa. In 1942 he was posted to Calgary, Alberta, the area where I was born and grew up. We were married in 1944.

After Ken was discharged from the R.C.A.F. in 1945 in Calgary, a group of veterans and their wives were discussing future careers, now that the lads were civilians again. Someone suggested homesteading in the Peace River Region and I replied, "That is the last place you'll ever find me!" But two years later the various newspapers carried articles with news of the veterans project. It looked like a promising future.

In the summer of 1949, a group of four veterans from our district near Calgary drove north to the Wanham-



Caterpillars working on Lassiter Project.

Belloy area to look the situation over. Travelling together were the late Earl Boss, Frank Koosey, my brother Bill Sallis, who still resides in the area, and my husband, Ken Botham. They made inquiries as to what land was available for filing on. They were unable to tell much about the quality of the land as it was not all broken and floated down. They did however proceed to the town of Peace River to make an application and the four of them were able to get leases in a block. Section 11 - Twsp. 79 R - 2 W 6 and section 2 Twsp. 79 - R - 2 W 6 north of Belloy, which was a thriving hamlet at that time, having two large department stores, cafe, jewellery store, meat market, post office, grain elevator, public school and a very active community hall at the time.

Other veterans who took leases on the Simonson Project in the area were: Floyd Domay, Preston Roberts, Louis DeTourdonnet, Clarence Urness, the late Roy Keller, Irvend Madsen and Bill Morrell.

I recall my first quick trip into the area in the autumn of 1949 with my husband, when he took me to see the area where we would eventually make our home. It seemed such a big country with vast areas of wasteland as

we travelled along. We had to cross the Smoky River at Watino on a ferry which was a real adventure for me. Many of the homesteads we passed were not very prosperous looking. The area where we were to settle had been burnt off in 1943 and the wood lots showed ugly black stumps which were not a very attractive addition to the landscape.

In November that same year, Ken, Frank Koosey and a crew of three other men again made the trip north to Frank's homestead site to build two shelters in readiness for the following spring when the Peace River country would be our new home. They travelled north with a two ton truck and a car. The truck was used to haul lumber from the lumberyard in Wanham and, covered with a tarpaulin served as a shelter to sleep in. A midget wood stove supplied heat until the first shelter was built. Two 14 ft. x 18 ft. shells were erected that fall, the plan being that they would serve as temporary houses and then be used for granaries later on. That original shell was to be our home for thirteen years with an addition to it when our first daughter, Naida, arrived in 1954.

In the spring of 1950, the men loaded a box car in the Calgary area, with all our worldly possessions including a Model T Ford, which would prove to be a very handy mode of transportation. We were all set to go north to our new homesteads. The men went on ahead to prepare for this new way of life. A third shelter had be built for Bill and his wife, Pearl, and their two small sons, Gary aged three years, and Ted age two. That dwelling was built in Belloy because of spring break-up, and later moved north to the Koosey homestead, as there were no roads farther north at that time. So, there were three residences all on Koosey property until later in the summer when the fields were dry enough to skid them to the respective Sallis and Botham homesteads. We would be using trails through fields for a considerable time before roads were built by our property.

In late April of 1950 we were all settled in and quite enthusiastic about this new venture, fully determined to give it our best. I feel sure that the original old homesteaders, who grubbed every acre with an axe, were envious of our good fortune of coming in on one half section of land supposedly ready for cropping. However they gave us a warm welcome and were extremely kind and helpful to us. The Steve Howard family showered us with many acts of kindness those first difficult years when we were trying to establish ourselves.

Because of limited budgets, Bill and Ken decided to combine resources to get their crops in the first year. Frank Koosey and Earl Boss would also work together.

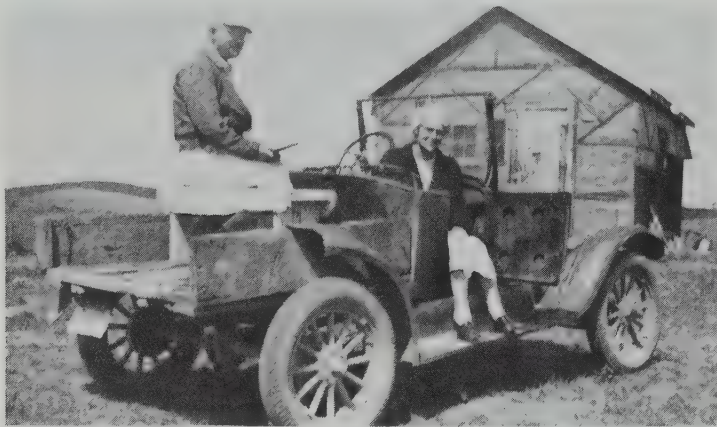
One of the first things we discovered was that before machinery could be put on the land, roots and logs would have to be picked. These varied in size from willow crowns half buried to quite large logs and stumps. So with a team of horses borrowed from Mrs. Mazerkewich and a flat rack, the work began. Pearl and I had an arrangement whereby each took a turn caring for the little boys and being chief cook and bottlerwasher, alternate to a day on the root pile with the men. We started early in the morning with lots of spunk and energy. My dad, the late William Sallis Sr., came north to give us a hand and so we made him teamster. We found



Ken Botham - 1942.

ourselves with arms piled high with roots struggling towards that flat rack only to hear Dad say, "Gee-up!" and we would have to make a run for it to dump our loads. Walking in that loose dirt all day with arms full of roots and logs proved to be no easy task, and everywhere we looked there were more ...

A good water supply was not easily available that first year, but we soon discovered during a hot day in the root field that water out of any handy pothole would quench our thirst. (One had to be careful not to swallow any wigglers floating in the water!) When we came home at night from picking roots all day, our bodies black with dirt, it was a real challenge to try and wash oneself clean in a basin of water. Later dugouts would supply us with plenty of water, but to this day I find this source of H₂O difficult to accept.



Taxi anyone? Charles and Leona Botham in Ken's Model T Ford in front of Botham homestead shack.

One of our greatest trials was the endless mosquitoes. Because of many potholes and sloughs on our rolling land, it was an ideal habitat for breeding endless varieties, all vicious for our new blood. At night we used a portable smudge in a bucket and took it from house to house to smoke out the mosquitoes so we could get some sleep. Tired were we, after tramping in soft dirt day after day ... Finally because the days were getting short for safe cropping, we had to make a quick job of the remainder of the root picking. After the crop was planted Bill and his family left for Hines Creek where Bill was employed by the Alberta Wheat Pool. Ken and I again went over the section of land and picked as many roots as we could before the crop got too high, so that these would not be a hazard to the combine, which was to be purchased to harvest the crop. I recall one time when the two of us were at the eternal task, I felt something biting me. That was one time I was thankful we were alone and isolated as I had to strip down. That is when I discovered the true meaning of 'ants in your pants', from a log I had been carrying.

As the crop grew we waited with great anticipation. In mid August, a heavy wet snow came and flattened the crops to the ground. We began to wonder about the climate in this famous Peace River country. Eventually the snow melted and the crops came up and everything looked promising again.

Ken purchased a Massey-Harris pull-type combine ready for harvest. It was the first combine to go north of Belloy, and the older settlers thought he was foolish. They said this was no country for combining. Brother Bill hired our neighbor, Bill Morrell to help Ken take off the crop that first harvest. The weather was excellent and they were able to combine from early September until mid October and so all the first crop was harvested. Jim Howard and his crew threshed 45 acres of oats for us that year for the minimal charge of \$48.50.

That first fall of 1950, Ken and I planned to go south again to Calgary for the winter months as our dwelling was not suitable for winter living. The green lumber had shrunk, leaving cracks and the wind blew in quite freely. The temperature dipped down to the thirty below zero range before we were ready to go south. We would waken in the mornings with our blankets stiff from our breath. It did not take long to wake up when one's feet hit the cold floor.

Money was very scarce for many veterans and their families those first years. Some veterans had to go out of the district to find employment to support their families. This caused problems for the residential part of leasing. Rumors went about the area that some Government officials were checking outhouses to see if the fellows were putting in the necessary residence.

Settlers north of the Burnt River on the original Lassiter Project suffered many hardships. Many factors were involved - some felt the land had been broken too deeply and it would not produce well. Eventually the Government helped these people to relocate elsewhere. A great portion of the acreage there was turned into a community pasture which now serves a large area of the local cattle industry as well.

In 1955 we were able to sign contracts with Canadian Utilities Ltd. to have the power come north of the tracks of Belloy. This was the beginning of an improved standard of living for us.

In August, 1956 our second daughter Carolyn Dene was born in the Grande Prairie Hospital, a welcome addition to the family.

In 1956 the Government gave veterans the opportunity



Belloy Ladies' Curling Club, 1959. Left to Right: Nellie Scott, Noreen LaBrier, Betty Nordvie, Rose Gruise, Vivian Scott, Dot Botham, Bertha Melnyk, Kitty Lewis.

to purchase their units on a cost basis. Ken purchased our homestead under this new agreement.

From that time on our area changed rather quickly. Individual homesteads were sold to neighbors and thus our acreage grew, but our neighbors decreased.

As time progressed we purchased another section of land adjoining our homestead. It became necessary for me, like many other wives to help with the harvest, etc. Now, my ability as tractor operator or truck driver left a lot to be desired. One particular harvest I recall when the crop was good, we were besieged by rain prior to harvest, leaving the fields sodden. Ken would frequently get the Massey 410 combine stuck, trying to get as close as he could to potholes to combine as much of the grain as possible. I would have to attempt to pull the combine out backwards. I was certain the tractor was going to upend,



Ken, Dot, Naida and Dene and their new home - 1963.

or that huge combine would climb on top of me and the tractor! As a result I would jerk the clutch out and stall the tractor, or break the chain. Tempers would flair. One day with tears rolling down my face I said, "You wouldn't talk that way to a hired man!" Ken replied, "If you were a hired man, I'd fire you!"

Trucking grain from the combine was another experience. One day while backing up to the grain auger to unload, I crunched the auger - I was not very popular that day either. Thereafter, Ken made certain I had blocks for the truck wheels to back up to. One year when the crop was light, I took a book to the field to read while waiting for Ken to fill the hopper of the combine. I became deeply engrossed in my story and when I finally looked up the field, there my man was patiently waiting with the hopper bulging with grain.

Livestock during the early years on the homesteads in our area was a problem. Pigs, cattle, horses. Everyone in our area had some, but fences to contain these animals

were not evident at many of the farms, and so livestock roamed at will. One day after baking a saskatoon pie I set it outside on the step to cool for dinner. Later, hearing a noise on the step I rushed out to see the last of my pie being devoured by a neighbors' pig!

Brother, Bill Sallis, came home one day to find his wife Pearl in tears from chasing neighbor's livestock out of her garden all day. He sent all the neighbors the following epistle by mail the next day:

Excerpts from the Second Book of Moses
Verse 128 Page 954

And it came to pass that a few of the disciples turned their cattle loose to wander at will, and it came to pass that these small herds of cattle merged together into one vast herd and they roamed the fields of the people causing much waste and destruction thereof. And there was much unhappiness in the land. And the people went to the Lord and the Lord said, "Have patience my people, something will deliver us from this menace. They would have none of my council. They despised all of my reproof. Therefore, shall they eat of the fruit of their own way."

And it came to pass one morning Moses awoke to find the cattle eating of his rich abundant meadow and in a fit of anger and despair he slew the beasts and shared the meat thereof evenly with the people and there was much happiness in the land.

End of Lesson

Let us pray:

We pray oh Lord, that these few disciples will mend their ways (or their fences), lest we are forced to put the matter in the hands of our lawyer who, unfortunately oh Lord, has lost ten of his last cases, but whom we pray oh Lord will not lose this one.

Amen.

Silas second son of Joseph.

While we had many years when our crops were not the best due to adverse weather conditions, we managed to get by. Many local business men should be acknowledged for the extended credit given to veterans during lean times. Unfortunately, this kindness was sometimes taken advantage of.

Today, as we look around, the changes that have occurred are unbelievable. The vast improvements in our roads, the many modern homes that one sees throughout the rural areas and progress made with today's farm machinery.

Speaking from our own experience we were never sorry we came north to the Peace River area to homestead. The warm friendly people that make up our community are always willing to extend a helping hand to any neighbor no matter what the need; and people are the most important resource our province has.

In November 1973, our daughter Naida married Wayne Sather and they reside on the original Edward Sather homestead with their two children Dalyce and Skye.

My husband, Ken, passed away in December 1973, after very patiently suffering a lengthy terminal illness, during which time many acts of kindness were extended to our family from the wonderful people of this community. Work bees were organized to seed and harvest our crop the first year he was ill. Many other groups and individuals helped our family through a very difficult time with so many kind deeds, for which our family will be forever grateful.

Our daughter Dene graduated from the University of Alberta School of Nursing as a registered nurse in 1976 and presently resides and nurses in Victoria, B.C.

In 1976 I married Charles Brissard, a widower formerly of Duncan, B.C. who likes to tell everyone, "tongue in cheek", that he answered my ad in the *Lonely Hearts Column* of the 'Western Producer'. By this second marriage I acquired a son, Ken, who also likes to tell me how lucky I am, getting "two for one".

GASPARD BOUCHARD

I opened up a cafe in Wanham in September 16, 1946. At the time I had rented Mrs. Nels Jacobsens's restaurant. It just so happened I was in partnership with Harvey Lewis. He remained with me only 2 months and thought cafe work was too hard.

In those days we had sugar ration and butter ration. My ration was 10 pounds a month of sugar and butter; ice cream, 5 gallons for the year; pop, 10 cases 24 bottles for the year.

We had meatless days 2 days a week. Tuesday and Friday we could not serve any beef, chicken, turkey or fish, so of course we served lots of vegetarian dishes with poached eggs on the side.

The Lassiters land clearing project came in then. At first we had 65 men to feed 2 meals a day and they took lunch out. So that really helped. I rented Jacobsen's



Yvette and Gaspard's wedding - June 27, 1963.

restaurant for a period from September 16, 1946 to March 31, 1948. I then built the coffee shop across the street. It was called Gaspard's Cafe, with the slogan "A good place to dine," (or they used to tell me, a good place to die in. Ha Ha.)

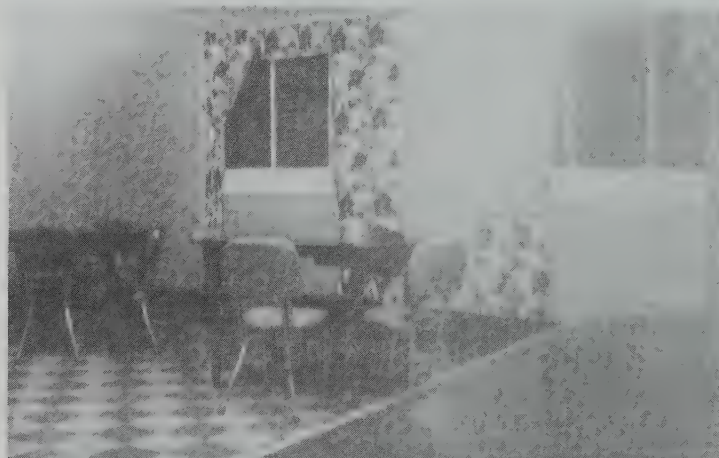
In the first 4 or five years water was certainly a problem. After closing the cafe either at 11 p.m. or midnight, I would have to haul water by hand from Tansem's dug out; 2 pails at a time until I filled a barrel to carry me on through next day. We certainly did not waste much water in those days.

In all the years in the cafe in Wanham, I'll always remember how Saturday nights used to be the greatest. The stores used to stay open till 9:00 p.m. and of course, we had shows which brought in farmers for shopping and show. After the show, it was a great place to have coffee and sometimes papa and mama went bar hopping while Gaspard babysat till midnight and then, of course, they'd stop for another coffee and Denver sandwich or hot bowl of chili-con-carne.

Oh, I forgot to mention about the oil rush in Wanham. I don't remember the dates but it lasted several years. That also brought great business. In the 1950's there were



Gaspard in front of his Wanham Cafe.



Inside Gaspard's cafe.

16 business places and when I left Wanham in 1966, there were only 10 left open.

I got married on June 27, 1963. The wedding was at St. Patrick Church at Wanham and the reception at Belloy Hall with 125 guests for the banquet with a dance that followed. It was a nice wedding and reception.

Our oldest boy was born in Spirit River Hospital on April 27, 1964.

Gerald, the second boy, was born at the Royal Alex Hospital September 2, 1966.

I should have kept a diary of my Wanham days. I had bad times and good times as well.

I left Wanham 14 years ago on May 22, 1966, when my coffee shop, known as Gaspard's Cafe, burnt out.



Margaret Brown and children.



Hay stack and barn of Nathan Bramlet. Grizzly Bear Prairie, January 1917.



Johnny King, 1947.

BILL BROWN

In the spring of 1928 I decided to go to the Peace River country and try to take a homestead.

I landed in Wanham, Alberta, April, 1928. I met Art Tansem and he took me out to look at a place that had been filed on in 1918. I looked it over and had to cancel and wait for thirty days before filing on the homestead which was in Peoria.

Sammy Ramsfield was my closest neighbor. Roy Leverington and Art Tansem were also neighbors. I spent the fall and winter of 1928 on the homestead, clearing land and building a shack. I slept my first night in the shack on my birthday, which was November 19. In my

spare time I would walk in to Wanham and spend a lot of time with Pete Tansem. Mrs. Pete was a great cook and she was very good to me. Treated me like one of her own boys. After a few good meals, I'd head back to the homestead and clear some more land.

Midsummer of 1929 I had eighteen acres ready to break up. Sammy Ramsfield and I cleared thirty acres for Mr. Toftner and his son Lawrence came and broke eighteen acres each for Sammy and me.

In the fall of 1929 I went back to Saskatchewan for harvest.

In the spring of 1930 I became engaged to Margaret Coghill, a girl I went to school with. She later became my wife.

In the spring of 1930 I returned to the homestead. I cleared twelve acres of land and Eric Ziprick broke it for me. In 1931 I cleared twenty acres and Sandy Laughland broke that for me. He charged five dollars per acre. That year I got the title for my homestead.

In the summer months we used to have ball teams in Peoria. The teams consisted of Ed Sather (catcher), Lawrence Toftner, Wendland boys, Olsons, Zipricks, Reisswigs, Davidsons, Rottackers and many more. We had enough to make two teams.

The first of July we picked the best and took a team into Wanham and played. There were three teams playing. Peoria took first prize, Belloy second, and



Bill and Margaret Brown.

Wanham third.

One day Lawrence Toftner came along to my place and said Wanham wanted him and me to go with their team to play at Rycroft sports. I said, "Heck, I can't go I'm broke". Lawrence said, "Oh, no, you aren't broke. You have fifteen bucks coming from Reiswig's sawmill, due you for cutting cordwood." So we picked that up and away we went. We got second prize that day.

In the fall of 1931, I returned to Saskatchewan for harvest. I worked for my cousin, helped with the harvest, cut wood, cleaned grain, anything to make a few bucks. He was a bachelor. We made a bet. The first one to marry, the other one was to give him the best arm chair in Eaton's catalogue, which was then only \$14.50. Of course, I won the bet.

LUCK OF THE BROWNS

We married in May, 1933, and left for Peace River June 3. We arrived in Wanham June 11, after a few mishaps. I had bought a second hand Chevy 1/2 ton truck, built a cab on it and took off. We hadn't gone twenty miles when we had to buy two new tires. Thirty miles from Saskatoon we broke the back axle. Luck was with us there, for when we stopped a car drove up behind us and stopped also. They had the axle in the back of their car. They put it in for us and only charged two bucks.

We also had another lucky break eighty miles from Lloydminster. It was a holiday and we had engine trouble, so we drove into the garage. The attendant got everything fixed up and I handed him a cheque to cash. He couldn't cash it and the bank wouldn't be open until Monday, so he said "How much cash have you in your pocket?" I emptied my pocket and had one dollar and seventy cents. He says, "I'll take that". I am sure I must have owed him him ten dollars for his work, but he was satisfied and so was I.

We finally arrived in Wanham. Of course, Mrs. Tansem and family were there to greet us. We stayed in Wanham a couple of days, then went out to the homestead. We lived there until the fall, in a little old log shack. Then W. Sterling wanted us to go and work for him. I worked in the fields and Margaret kept house. We got twenty-five dollars per month until after Christmas. Then we moved up to his house he bought from Seibels.

In January, 1934, our daughter Jean was born. We lived there until spring, then moved back to Stirlings. He hired us for eight months, \$25.00 per month.

In 1935, we went to Allen Grahams on a half crop share on our fifty acres and his half section. The crops were all frozen that year so our share amounted to twenty-five dollars. We decided to move into Wanham in the fall of 1935, and Ray and Ida Tansem were good enough to give us rooms above their restaurant. My wife helped Ida with the house work, and I cut and hauled wood for them and the town. I got one dollar and a half a load. We stayed around Wanham for the next three years getting work where we could.

In 1938, the crops looked poor in Wanham and they were good in Saskatchewan, so we bundled up again and headed for Saskatchewan.

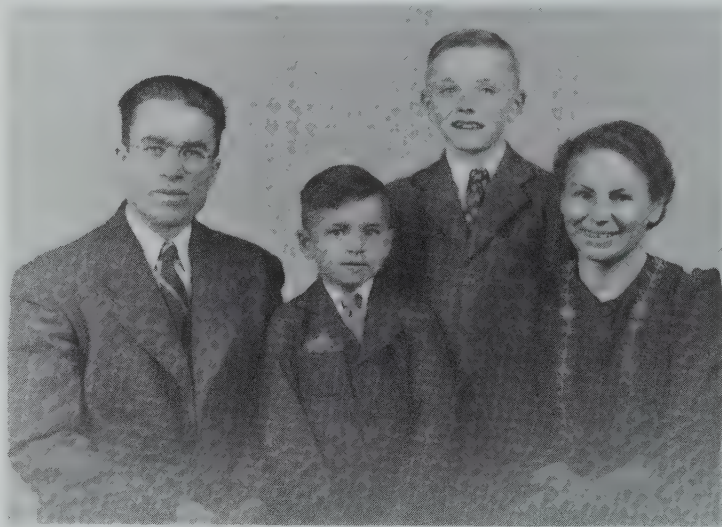
In 1939, we worked for a farmer for the season at \$35.00 per month. Louie Hoeght had a job for me working in the Grain Growers elevator.

The war broke out in the fall of thirty-nine. I was on my way to Wanham, riding the rail, when the boys were all rounded up by the cops and told to go into the station in Saskatoon. When the cops left, the conductor said to me, "Are you a married man? If you are, get out there on the highway and someone will pick you up." So I hit the road and headed for home. I imagine the other boys had to join up.

In 1940, I bought a half section of land for a thousand dollars. I had sold my homestead in Peoria, Alberta, by this time for fifteen hundred dollars.

In 1941, I went back to Wanham to gather up our belongings. We took back a carload on the train. Team of horses, furniture, three hundred bushels of oats, and lumber. We have farmed in Tantallon ever since. We had a family of four, two boys and two girls. We are now retired and spend our winters in Texas.

I sure enjoyed the homecoming celebration at Wanham in 1978.



The Brucks Family. Left to Right: Jake, Marvin, Don and Ophelia.

THE JAKE BRUCKS

We came to the Peace River country in 1951 on a settlers effects car arriving in Wanham of that year on the eleventh of May. By the time we were settled and had purchased the seed, it was well into June before the seed went into the ground. Being quite a wet summer and with a fairly early fall, the wheat froze to a No. six and feed. We brought with us eight head of cattle, most of them purebred shorthorns, one sheep and one horse and no debts so we made out quite well.

We feel the "Peace" has been good to us.

My wife, Ophelia (Weis), was born in Lehigh, Kansas, and shortly thereafter moved, with her parents, to Leader, Saskatchewan. I was born in the electoral District of Rosthern north of Saskatoon in Saskatchewan. Both of our boys, Donald James and Marvin Ross, were born in Saskatoon. Don is a salesman in

southern Alberta and Marvin is farming in this Peoria District.

We have five grandchildren; four girls and one boy.

Quite a number of years ago in the late 1920's when I was quite young, I was on one of our not too much used roads near our home and a couple of men on horseback drove a large herd of horses past our place. I asked one of them where they were taking them to. He replied, "to the Peace River country". I was always a lover of horses. That could have been the seed that turned my thoughts towards this beautiful part of Canada and we have never looked back. We like the people and we like the land.

My wife had the post office in Peoria a number of years till she was of retirement age. Then it was closed and now we have a rural route mail delivery.

In these thirty years that we have been here, there have been so many improvements - especially farming technology, roads and the general economy. When we went through Edmonton in 1951 a friend said to me he believes the Peace River country is the land of tomorrow. I think he was right.

THE BRYNDZAK FAMILY OF WANHAM

by Kathleen Bryndzak

It was while employed by the British Embassy in Poland that Paul Bryndzak first heard about Canada. In 1909 he immigrated and settled on land in the Red Water area of Alberta.

In 1928, his son Dominik, with his wife and daughters, Mary and Audry, came from Poland to a homestead in the Prestville area. There was no school for the girls to attend, so Dominik himself began their education. Their first home was a shack with three sides of lumber and the fourth of sod. In this humble dwelling, in January of 1929, Matt was born.

Concerned that the girls receive an education in English, Dominik moved with them to Wanham, leaving Mrs. Bryndzak to keep up the farm. Ralph Pickard offered Dominik a shack to live in, beside his garage. Mrs. Pickard, Ralph's mother, befriended the little girls, teaching them numerous things, including the useful art of knitting.

Dominik started business as a shoe- and harness-maker for Wanham and its surrounding community. With the proceeds he was able to buy from Art Ramsfield, three acres of land "under the hill." Ralph Pickard helped Dominik get out enough logs with which to build a comfortable log home. Mrs. Bryndzak with Matt and another little daughter called Helen, now joined Dominik and the two girls and, on Armistice Day of 1935, the whole family moved into their new home.

There was a shop at the front of the cabin for the business of shoe- and harness-making and repair, with living quarters at the back and in the loft above. In the house yard, the family raised a garden from which they offered for sale some of the best strawberries ever grown in the area. On the remainder of the lot, they kept milk cows and pigs. A familiar sight was that of the Bryndzak children herding the cows along the road allowances.



Gloria Johnson, Kathleen Bryndzak.

Meanwhile, Mary began school. The teacher, Mr. MacTavish, had communication problems with the Polish girl. When he failed to understand her urgent need to leave the room, and the inevitable accident occurred, it was Gordon MacDonald who shielded her from the jeers of her classmates and so became her hero.

When Mary arrived home in tears because she couldn't learn to read, it was Eli Barret who befriended, and introduced her to the world of books that completely lined one whole wall of his bachelor's shack on the top of the hill. Included were piles of British newspapers and magazines. Mary had to read them all. One book, ("The Man With The Iron Mask" is the way Mary remembers it) which she was required to read four times, eventually became her well deserved gift from her mentor.

Eli also taught the Bryndzaks how to play his favorite game of Bridge. Mary became the fourth player and many a weekend evening was passed in this pursuit.

While the Bryndzaks were still in Prestville, they had become associated with the Presbyterian Church, and met the missionary-deaconess, Miss Grigor. As Miss Grigor's headquarters was in Wanham, the friendship continued with the move there. When the annual Christmas Concert was pending, and the question arose as to what the Bryndzak children would wear to such an auspicious occasion, it was Miss Grigor who arrived with wonderful new-used clothes for each one of them. The highlight of the evening for Mary, however, was the present under the Christmas tree with her own name on it. That was her first Christmas present.

The Bryndzak parents continued to plant and harvest a crop each summer on the homestead in Prestville. While they were away from home attending to this, Mary was in charge of the household. Mrs. Pickard and Ralph continued their interest in the children at such times. Mary was given the responsibility of ordering the seeds and planting them in the garden. One year she planted peanuts, which grew in wild profusion, yielding nothing that was visible to the eye. Considering them a waste of good space, Mrs. Bryndzak ordered that they be pulled. What a surprise to the whole family to learn that peanuts grow underground! Many a good snack of home-grown, roast peanuts was enjoyed.

During several of the fall seasons that Dominik was in Wanham, he stooked grain for George MacDonald, and

worked on his threshing outfit as the extra man feeding bundles into the threshing machine. With his salary added to the family income, Mary was able to spend some of the milk money to realize a dream ... her own mandolin, which afforded her many a happy moment.

In 1940, Domink Bryndzak joined the Canadian Infantry. During training, while participating in reconnaissance manoeuvres, he was wounded and received an honorable discharge. Meanwhile Mary married and had moved away from Wanham. The rest of the family now moved to Edmonton where Dominik, employed by the Government, was able to work at the carpentry trade he had learned in Poland.

Mrs. Bryndzak is deceased, but Dominik still lives in Edmonton. Also living in Edmonton are Mary (Mrs. Marshall); Kathleen (Mrs. Pete Kanesiwick) and Helen (Mrs. Soluk). Audry (Mrs. Brant) lives in Vancouver and Matt, also married lives in Calgary.

WIB AND CLARA BUCHANAN ANECDOTE

by Sam Parlee

THE FIRST VISIT

The wagon and rack pulled up in front of our rustic dwelling on a starry evening in February, 1931. The air was calm and mild as early autumn. Wib Buchanan, a cheery homesteader of stocky build, leaped out of the rack and introduced himself, his wife and four year old boy, Weldon.

Wib had sent word to my dad, who made regular trips to town with butter and eggs, that he would like some provisions. Clara had just arrived on the homestead where her husband and Ted Henry, their nearest neighbor, had put up a log cabin. "Put the team in the barn and come in, we've got mail and groceries for everybody" came the greeting from the proprietor. They did as they were bidden. Weldon played the entire evening on the floor with the collie pup given to me by Lawrence Wilson. "He's sure a cute little pup", the dad remarked as boy and dog romped and tousled each other in complete oblivion to the smiles and chuckles of their more mature admirers.

One item in the grocery list was coffee. My dad had taken the liberty to bring coffee beans as Pete Tansem had a deal wherein there was a considerable saving. Wib roared with laughter at the thought of heading for the homestead with the unground product. His fears however were soon put at ease when my mother offered to put it through the grinder. Soon the tantalizing aroma of ground coffee permeated the place and the prospects of a cheery cup for breakfast appeared to be something certain.

We talked of roads that would be opened, houses and barns that would be built. New settlers were moving in and an air of expectancy prevailed in the hearts and minds of the men and women of that day. The settlers had put up a log school, which was in operation, and it can truly be said that the proverbial goose hung high.

FIRE TAKES THE CABIN

In the spring Wib and Clara left their homestead to work for a farmer in Chinook Valley. A forest fire came through and burned up their home as well as the log cabin that Ted occupied on the Bert Sales place, which lay just north of his homestead. The Carl Ganz couple also lost their home in the same fire.

In later years Buchanans bought a house that Ted had built for himself. Wib moved it to its present site and added to it. He farmed here for many years and acted as local road foreman, when the work was done with horses and freznos.

Weldon attended the West Vale School and joined the army in the second world war. He married Ruth Peebles and they farmed two miles west of Wib's place. Mr. Brucks bought both Wib's and Weldon's farms about 1962.



The Bush Family. Left to Right: Lena holding Dennis, Edith and Charles.

CHARLES AND LENA BUSH

by L. Bush

In 1936 we decided to move from Saskatchewan to Alberta as we had had a severe drought for the last four years.

In 1932 my husband, Charlie, bought a quarter of land in Wanham but we did not have the money to move. In 1936 the Dominion Government paid out a sum of money to the farmers who had lost heavily on the 1930 crop handled by pools. As our 1930 crop year was good we were lucky to get \$600.00 and the chance to move to the Peace River country, where they said there never was drought. On October 12, 1936, we loaded all our possessions in a railroad car and left for the promised

land. The horses, machinery, household goods were all packed, and my husband had to travel in the car as it took 3 days and horses had to be looked after. I and the children, the youngest 6 weeks old, stayed with friends for a few days until my husband could get settled. There were no buildings or fences on the place.

When my husband arrived at Wanham he met Mr. Laurence Leriger, who was a dray man in Wanham. Mr. Leriger introduced my husband to Bill Trumpower, and Mr. Trumpower offered the use of his sod-roof cabin, which was 10 x 12 feet. When the children arrived everything was packed in tight but we were happy. We had a roof over our heads. My husband went threshing with Bill Trumpower and we were surprised at the heavy crop after 4 years of drought in Saskatchewan. In the meantime we met Frank Carpenter, and after threshing, the 3 men cut logs and built a log cabin just across the road from Trumpowers. We did not have any money to spend on the house except for things we really had to have, such as small windows and rough boards for the floor. The roof was sod and when it rained we had everything wet. The cracks between the logs were chinked with mud and straw, which was quite warm and more roomy than our original abode.

PARTNERS IN CRIME

We brought 50 pullets with us. As we did not have a building to put them in, Mr. Hauser, who was oil agent and lived in town, offered us the use of the old barn that he still had on his farm. His farm was on the south side of ours. We put our chickens there and I went there mornings to feed them and evenings to close them up with a makeshift door. One morning as I came there I saw feathers all around and the door broken open. The bears broke the door, the coyotes got the chickens.

In 1937 we had our first crop in Wanham. We only had 17 acres broken, but the crop was good. In later years we rented some land and gradually made it to where we could make a good living.

The one problem was the school. We lived on S.E. 25-77-2, which made it six miles to either Wanham school or Belloy. Some winters were quite open and some drifted quite bad. In summer time it wasn't too bad. They rode their bikes. In winter time we had to haul them to school or sometimes they would ride horseback. Even later on when the first school bus came, driven by Jim Rutherford, the kids still had to walk two miles to the highway and had to leave home with a lantern during the winter.

THE ROLAND BUTTERWICK STORY

I came to Canada from England in the year 1905 at the age of 2 years. My father took up a homestead in Brownfield where I was raised and got my schooling in the little white school house where the teacher had grades from one to eight. I left school at the age of fifteen and worked at home till the age of 21. I then moved to Pincher Creek to make my fortune on a ranch. I went into partnership with Sam Lee on a small ranch where we



Rowland Butterwick on one of his saddle horses.

raised horses and cattle and tame hay for market. We ranched there for four years. In the spring of 1927 there was a great rush to the Peace River country to take up homesteads. Well we got the urge to go. So we set out for Wanham in a 1927 Dodge touring car. When we got to Edmonton we were told not to try it by car, so we took the E.D. and B.C. railroad. "The ever delayed and badly constructed". It was a nickname then. My father in law, John Noren was there ahead of us and wrote us that it was a great country and how right he was. It was great then - lots of good timber, but the fires, sorry to say, took it all. Sam Lee filed right away and returned to the ranch. My quarter the N.E. 1/4 16-76-3-W6th had been filed on and abandoned so I had to wait a month for it to be thrown open for homesteading. So I went to work for a month for J.R. Hunter of Sexsmith. Later I bought a Hudson Bay 1/4, the N.E. 10-76-3-W6th. After filing I returned to Pincher Creek. I was married that December to Esther Noren and in the spring of 1928 I shipped two car loads to Wanham; one car of horses and one of horses and settlers effects. My wife came up in June after I got the house built. Looking back the 30's were a good time. Cash was scarce but we had lots of fun - dances at Wanham. Don Morrison had a big log house. We had built the Heart Valley School. I remember going to a dance at Wanham and when we got home it was 40 below zero. I got a fire going as we didn't like to leave a big fire on. After getting the fire going, I went to put the kettle on for coffee, and couldn't break the ice in the pail with the dipper, so I got the brace and bit and went through the ice



Esther on her favorite saddle horse.

- also the bottom of the water pail! In 1930 I took over the job of local foreman on the roads under Mr. McQuarrie of Grande Prairie. I did road work and farmed until joining the armed forces in April, 1940. Upon returning in 1945 I farmed for two years, then sold out and went into construction - building houses, schools and grain elevators etc. Finally I built a business for myself which is the Green Lantern Cafe and General Store at Brownfield and have been operating this since September, 1960.

THE CAMERONS

by Jean Ramsfield

Roy, Gertrude and children - Harry, Jean, Monthelene, Kathelene, Tom, Jack and Uncle Rance Cameron.

Our home was in Saskatoon where Dad had been in the monument business as well as groceries and fruit. About 1927 or early 1928, we had two visitors whom Dad had known years before when he had homesteaded in Southern Saskatchewan. They were returning from filing on homesteads in the Peace River Country. They were Joe Hauser and Dave Funk. They were fired with enthusiasm of their survey and full of talk of their planned move to a town call Wanham, Alberta.

Dad and Mother listened with interest and Dad got the urge to return to farming which he had always loved. He decided to see for himself, and the result was a trip to Wanham where he filed on a homestead eight miles from the town, and also one for his brother, Rance Cameron. This area became later known as West Vale.



Mr. and Mrs. Roy Cameron - 1966.

Mother and Dad sold their house in Saskatoon. In our 1928 Model T Ford, loaded with camping gear and their six children, ranging in age from three months to fifteen years, they set out to drive to Vancouver to spend the winter. It was quite a trip in those days over narrow, twisting, unpaved roads, but it seemed a marvelous and

exciting adventure to us children.

In the spring of 1929, Dad returned to Saskatoon and bought horses and machinery, loaded a box car with the rest of our household goods and was on his way to Wanham. Arriving there and realizing that a school near his homestead was several years away, he made an offer and bought the Rob Webster farm, across from the one room South Slope School just one mile south of Wanham.

About this time also, Dad's brother, Rance, arrived to prove up his homestead in West Vale, and he later bought the farm of Duncan Cameron (no relation), across from his brother Roy's at Wanham. A corner of this quarter was the site of the first South Slope School.

Dad went to Vancouver to collect the family, and once again we set out in our Model T Ford to retrace our journey as far as Calgary and then north to Edmonton and Wanham. Around Slave Lake heavy rains had washed out the roads and men were trying to repair them by laying poles across the road. Here we had numerous delays and many times our car had to be hauled by team over the rough corduroy. There was one delay which took us nine hours to travel over eleven miles of this dreadful road with the hungry mosquitoes ever present, a taste of what was to come later. Eventually we were on better roads and on our way towards Peace River town, Dunvegan Ferry, and our new home at Wanham. We arrived there in July, 1929, and that was our home for a number of years.

Dad and Mother added an ell to the two storey log house on the farm as well as numerous barns, granaries, etc. In the bitter winter of January, 1936, this house was completely destroyed by fire, but fortunately the family escaped serious injury. A more modern lumber house was built on the old site that spring. Dad and Harry were assisted in the building by Art Ramsfield and Russel Laughy.

In front of our house and at a short distance, a dam had been built. Water for household use was carried in pails, and at the far end of it's length, the stock was watered. Water for drinking had to be hauled or sometimes carried by pail by Pete Anderson. Sometimes it was hauled from a distance of one half mile from the farm of Art Ramsfield. One end of the dam was eight or nine feet deep and a good place to swim. In winter it made an excellent skating rink when cleared of snow. It was frequently used by the town people of Wanham as a favorite spot. The men and boys would use a nearby granary as a change house and the girls used a bedroom in our house. In winter our kitchen was used for skate changing and warming frozen toes and fingers. All visitors were made welcome.

Dad and Mother were keenly interested in community affairs and entered into all projects concerning it. Dad served for many years on the board of South Slope School, and was one of those instrumental in keeping the high school at Wanham when there was great pressure to have it moved to Spirit River.

Mother was an accomplished pianist and often played for the school concerts, various church services, and weddings. She led and was pianist for the United Church choir during it's existence in Wanham. She helped

organize the Wanham Progressive Club was for a time president and remained a member until moving to Victoria in 1944.

The Cameron family all attended South Slope School except Harry, who completed his education by correspondence. From 1929 until 1933, there were only two high school students in the school. They were Jean Cameron and Barry Murphy. The remaining pupils were in grades one to eight, all in the same room.

Life on the farm was busy for all of the family, but there were fun times as well as work. Dad and Mother often joined in a game of baseball, and if there was a visitor or hired worker, they were called in to swell our teams. There was always music with singing around the piano. During the depression years, we had little spending money, but then neither did our parents. We made a lot of good times, there was always plenty to eat, enough to wear, and the love and companionship of caring parents. Our young friends were always made welcome.

In December, 1935, Jean married Art Ramsfield, and went to live on her husband's farm a half a mile away.

Monthelene became a teacher, going to Grande Prairie and Edmonton to attain her long-time ambition. Her first school on completing Normal School was at Steele in Belloy. She taught all grades through eight. She married Arnold Ramsfield in Victoria, on resigning from Steele.

Harry attended agricultural school at Vermilion, and met his future wife, Bertha Smith, there. They were married in Edmonton and returned to Wanham, where Harry farmed with Dad.

Kathelene became a social worker in British Columbia, and later moved to Portland, Oregon, where she now lives with her husband, Dr. Cover, and their two children.

Tom was in logging and Jack in the garage business. Both married and had families. Tom and Jack died in a highway accident near Victoria in 1960.

After Art and Jean Ramsfield left Wanham in 1940, the other members of the family gradually found their way to Victoria. Our dad and mother spent some winters away, but finally left Wanham in 1944 to live out their lives in Victoria.

Harry and Bertha made their move in 1949.

Three members of the Cameron family were in the armed forces during the war - Harry and Kathelene in the Airforce, and Tom in the Army.

ART CAMPBELL

submitted by Molly Murphy Tansem

Art Campbell came to the Wanham area late in 1918. He was a returned man from the first world war. He was a good neighbor. He had a very loud laugh which could be heard a long way.

His first cabin was on his west quarter which joined the Murphy land. Later he moved up on the hill of his east quarter where he'd dug a well which had very good water. We always used to stop there on the way home from school to have a drink.

He had good horses. I recall a team of buckskins which he had bought from a Mr. Hunt who had also taken land

but had given it up. Later Art had a very special big sorrel stallion.

He was a very good card player and was always called on to play Auction Bridge at the neighbors.

TICK TOCK

He bought a good alarm clock, but it would not run so one day he got real mad at it, opened the door and gave it a kick sending it sailing down the hill. He happened to pass near where it had landed shortly after and heard it ticking. He took it back to the cabin and it worked real good after that.

Art sold out in the mid thirties and moved away. He went north for awhile, then later lived near McLeod Lake, B.C. He was nick-named "McLeod Lake Campbell," there.

JACK CAMPBELL

Just to jot down a few facts and recollections of Wanham -

I arrived there in the Spring of 1939 - replacing Bernie Gant in the Alberta Wheat Pool Elevator. I boarded originally with Ray and Ida Tansem and eventually with Vera and Alex Sandercock. There were just two elevators at the time - the Pool and U.G.G. The U.G.G. was operated by Louis Hoeght.

My recollection of Wanham at that time is:

The garage was operated by Ralph Pickard - his mechanic was Andy Anderson. Ed Harrington operated the Post Office and was Payee for the U.G.G. Elmer Hill operated a store as did Carl Blonski. Alex Sandercock had a store and was also the barber. Vera helped him; Hermel Gerard owned and operated the Hotel. Mr. and Mrs. Nels Jacobsen ran the Cafe; Ed Prevost had the Massey-Harris Agency and B.A. Oil. Joe Hauser had the Case Agency and Imperial Oil. Mrs. Murphy was District Nurse and Ernie Trump was Station Agent. His wife was Hazel. There was a school principal at that time, I believe - his first or last name was Stuart. He and his wife lived near Ed Prevost's and had a small baby. There was another teacher when I arrived. She married a traveller and left shortly after. Then Grace Wishart from Grande Prairie taught and my present wife Norma Denver, also taught school there. She and Grace roomed and boarded with Ma Prevost - Ed's mother.

RECREATION

by Jack Campbell

We formed a baseball team and some members were: Gordon McDonald, Paul and Albert Leriger, Bill Laughy, Elmer Sather, myself, and others. We also built a skating rink behind Elmer Hill's store - with lights. Playing hockey were Bill Laughy, Gordon MacDonald, Elmer Hill, Paul and Albert Leriger, Ed Prevost, myself and others.

We held the first Klondike Night in the Peace River

country and it was a great success - we made enough money to build a stage in the Hall. The following Sunday we took the remaining apple cider to Ed Prevost's shop and ran it through the cream separator. We drank what came out of the cream spout - hopefully alcohol.

We also had a tennis court and during the winter had an active badminton club. The main sports centre was the Hotel beer parlour. Hermel was quite the operator. His favorite expressions were: "Why don't you go home" and "Sling this down your ugly gut". He was a wild car driver.

I remember a visit he had from his sister, her daughter and another woman. One of the daughters had just won the title of "Miss Oregon". I remember the car they drove was equipped with puncture proof tires, a miracle at that time. We all attended a dance in Belloy.

I remember being asked to chair a C.C.F. meeting for Emil Sather and brought down the wrath of Mr. W. McLean, Sr. of Heart Valley.

Red McLean and wife Thelma operated the store at Heart Valley and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Reiswig the one in Peoria.

I got blamed for painting Joe Hauser's Case Eagle on Hallowe'en night. I was innocent and still believe it was George McDonald and Jack McLean.

Charlie Geller, now deceased, was a bachelor with quite a career. He was Jewish, originally from Chicago - had served in the American Army, had taken his discharge and instructed Pancho Villa troops on machine guns. Then joined Canadian Army during World War I. After the war, he homesteaded near Wanham. Excellent cook, made a first class egg omelet. We often went home with him after playing horse-shoes, between the Post Office and Sandercock's.

GRAIN HAULING by Jack Campbell

I will always remember the long lines of teams hauling grain during the winter. Many from Bad Heart - Ole Moen, the Hill brothers, etc. Used to pull the load up the hill the day before, doubling up because it was so steep - then next day hauling into Wanham, often staying over in the Hotel. A three day trip to haul 60 - 80 bushels and the price I believe, was 35¢ for Garnet and maybe 50¢ a bushel for no. 1 wheat.

I remember Art Tansem's wife, Rose, being very sick and expected to die one night of a kidney ailment. She had been refused liquids but Vera Sandercock decided that was no way to die, so took her orange juice, etc. Next day, Rose was sitting up.

Making it up the Burnt River Hill was quite a chore if muddy, and I spent many a night at the bottom. A fellow who lived nearby, Rogers, I believe, charged us \$1.00 to pull us up. If I remember correctly he used a single horse. It must be remembered that there was no snow plowing, there was no gravel, so often we were locked into Wanham. Very seldom could a car get out much sooner than May 24.



COAL OIL CAR by Jack Campbell

I bought a 1934 car in the spring of '40. No money to buy anti-freeze so put oil and coal-oil in the radiator. Vera Sandercock, Ernie and Hazel Trump and myself drove to Spirit River for a show the day after the purchase. On the way home, near Rycroft, I put on the heater. Unbeknown, the hose connection between the "rad" and the heater had been removed and the car went up in smoke. Had to take the freight home next morning and Alex Sandercock called me "Arson Campbell."

I remember that Alex Sandercock's store seemed to be open all the time. I have seen him cutting hair at 11 p.m.

Ernie Trump developed an ulcer and kept goats near the station.



Jack Campbell on Main street in Wanham.

HERMEL GERARD by Jack Campbell

I will always remember Hermel Gerard, the innkeeper. He was usually snarly, would bring a beer to the table and say "sling that down your ugly gut". Also would ask us why we didn't go home. He bought a new car, I believe it was a Mercury and took me for a drive to Belloy - I suppose a better description would be that we flew to Belloy. He was a terrible driver, fast and forever overshooting corners. His sister, a friend and the two daughters of his sister visited Wanham. I believe that they came in a Cord car, I remember it had puncture proof tires. One of the girls had won the title Miss Oregon - both were beautiful. Went to a big, wild dance at Belloy and was racing Hermel back to Wanham. The dust was flying and I tried to pass him just as I hit the Heart Valley Road. Flew across the road and just missed the school.

WHO STOLE THAT BARREL by Jack Campbell

Jack and Red McLean created lots of excitement. Jack always walked around stiff and straight like a guard-

sman. Red was different. Had the store at heart Valley and was married to Thelma Sobey who had been raised in Coronation, Alberta, same place that I was. Red was always a little careless. One Saturday night I was going out to spend the night at Heart Valley and we were in the hotel having a beer. Red told me that he was going down to get a barrel of gas to deliver to Parlees. I do know that he headed toward the oil depot and when he returned we continued to drink a few beers. Finally headed out and drove to Parlees. Had to wake Mr. Parlee who got dressed, opened a couple of gates - we backed the truck up - then jumped up to unload the barrel - there was no barrel. I still do not know where he went - there were not too many places to go in Wanham but I do remember the dressing down we got from Mr. Parlee in that beautiful, resonant voice of his.

CRANKY
by Jack Campbell

Red was coming from Rycroft one day and his truck got stuck. He got so mad he picked up the crank, threw it through the windshield and walked to town. He and I just about got hit by a train north of Sexsmith - missed us a matter of feet. He and I left on the same train January 2, 1941, to join up.

CHINESE LUDEFISK
by Jack Campbell

I believe I told you of the time that Pete Tansem and Henry (ran the cafe) started Christmas early. Served that horrible ludefisk and gumalos. Pete was wearing a cooking pot on his head. He had a bad habit of ringing the telephone. We all had codes. Mine was 2 long and a short and a long. He would answer "this is Pete Tansem speaking and it is now 3 a.m." or some ungodly hour. Pete was another person that I have never seen mad and he was always good company.

THIS AND THAT
by Jack Campbell

There could be many stories about Ernie Trump, some not for publication. He was always worried about his health and had symptoms of all diseases mentioned. One time he was having stomach trouble and I casually mentioned goat's milk. The next thing I knew he had some goats housed not too far from my elevator.

POP SATHER
by Jack Campbell

The one memory I have of Pop Sather was in 1946. I had gone down to Wanham with Alf Ludbrooke and arrived in time for a good party in the bar. About 8 o'clock someone thought of the bright idea of going to a dance in Spirit River. So we jumped into an enclosed truck owned, I think, by a guy named McVicer. Pop didn't want to go, so we just picked him up, chair and all, took his beer table and his beer and deposited him in the truck. I'm not sure if he noticed the difference, everyone was in such a good mood.

Some of the students that my wife Norma remembers teaching are: Eugene Lipinski, Teddy Lipinski, Wally Tansem, George Nelitz, Jean Harrington, Jack Cameron, Buddy Metz, Jim Sawyer, Bob (?) Sawyer, Mary Putio, Ray Trump, Frances Jacobowski.

SNOWBALL BATH
by Jack Campbell

Most people did not realize the sense of humor that Alex Sandercock had. He was a great practical joker. I used to use their bathroom to bath. Of course, it was the old tub filled from water heated on the stove. One night I undressed in the kitchen, then into the bathroom. It was in the winter, about 40° below zero. I heard someone lock the bathroom door from the outside but thought nothing of it. Then I heard a noise at the window. Alex took off the storm window, pried up the window and then proceeded to throw snowballs at me. And that's cold!

WHO NEEDS FRONT SIGHT?
by Jack Campbell

One cold night a few of us sat in Alex's store and drank hair tonic - it was terrible and gave me a headache. Alex was a lot of fun to travel with and when he was away from Wanham, was the last of the big time spenders. I have nothing but pleasant memories of my stay in Wanham with Alex and Vera. Vera was definitely a character, possibly the best and quickest cook that I have ever met. We went out hunting chickens one time and Vera was knocking them off left and right. I asked her how high she was holding the front sight. She informed me that she didn't know you used the front sight. After that, she missed everything.

SUPPER COAT
by Jack Campbell

Alex never noticed what went on in the house and I saw Vera buy a table and chair set and he didn't even notice. I remember her buying a new coat, wearing it while serving supper and Alex didn't see it. Ma Tansem held the clan together and always had coffee on the stove. I can never remember her being mad.

HORSE IN PIT
by Jack Campbell

One day, at the elevator, Ray Tansem was dumping a load of grain, elevated it too high and a horse fell down under the scales. Had visions of buying a new horse, but Art Noreen just hooked a chain around its neck, backed on his team and yanked it out.

I used to have my lunch sent to me with one of the farmers. Alex Sandercock used to slip cardboard in my sandwiches and one time put lemon gin in my lemon aid. Had a light-hearted day, that day.

I remember Ethel Metz as a little girl walking to school in the cold weather.

I was paid the grand sum of \$110.00 per month and never got a raise.

I left Wanham on January 2, 1941 to join the Airforce. Red McLean and I left on the same train.

I enjoyed my 2 years in Wanham and have kind thoughts of those who lived there. I had a great deal of admiration for the Seventh Day Advent settlement in Peoria and thought them to be good farmers. George McDonald was a person of great community spirit and a wonderful sense of humor.

NORWEGIAN SUPPER

by Jack Campbell

There was a cafe operated by a Chinaman called Henry. I believe it was between Sandercock's and the hotel. On Christmas, he and Pete Tansem started to celebrate early. They invited us (or forced us) to a supper of Lutefisk and Gumolose - without a doubt the worst meal I have ever eaten. I can remember Pete going around with a tin pot on his head.

ORIST CHAPIN

by Sam Parlee

Mr. and Mrs. Orist Chapin and daughter Eunice lived in West Vale on the north side of the township line and west of the Alex Dopher farm. They came here from the U.S. and settled on a homestead. Mr. Chapin was a veteran and worked quite a lot for area farmers.

During the winter months, Eunice stayed at the Bohnke's during the week to be nearer to the school.

Mrs. Chapin passed away in this district slightly prior to 1936.

Later when Orist was applying for his pension he had to search out his birth certificate. While doing so, he discovered that in actuality he had been registered as a girl baby rather than a boy.

Mr. Chapin resided some on the George Olson farm.

Eunice returned to the U.S.

THE HISTORY OF THE CIESLAR FAMILY IN PEORIA

1936-1944

by Mrs. Cieslar

Leaving Poland in June, 1936, with a week's stopover in England and one week in Kelowna, we finally arrived in Vancouver where my brother, Carl Ganz, lived. In the course of time, no matter where you may roam on land or sea, nature had its way with us too, our first little Canadian baby was born in Vancouver. Being obligated to the Canadian Government, who only permitted immigrants with a substantial amount of money to enter, because of the depression years the country was in, we had to settle in Alberta. We arrived in Peoria where my brother, Bill Ganz, lived at that time. We found shelter with that wonderful family of George Reiswig's over winter until we bought a farm from the Hudson Bay Company.

Going was rough in the beginning. In the spring of

1937 Rudolph worked at the sawmill in Peoria for \$2.00 a day wages, walking the six miles each day because the horse he had was too old and bony to ride. He worked to get the lumber to build a house which would cost \$7.00 for 1000 feet, cut and planed, while the family lived in a granary over the summer. With the help of Emil Janot and the Kozak brothers, a house was hurriedly built, most of the work being finished after harvest time.

SMOKE HOUSE

Rudolph bought a stove without legs for \$2.00 on the night of November 24, the day before moving in. He installed it in a box containing earth and soon had a fire burning in it. The next morning the whole house was full of smoke but there seemed no apparent reason for it. On further inspection, he found that the box of earth was not enough insulation and the stove was about to fall through the smoldering floorboards.

C.L. CHRISTENSEN

I left my home in Denmark in 1928. I was 21 years of age and arrived in Canada with \$10.00 in my pocket. Work was not easy to find but finally (language being a barrier) did find work on a farm near Red Deer for a couple of months.

Then hearing some word of the Peace River Country, I left for the North via N.A.R. freight train, getting off at Wanham. I knew Nels Jacobsen and Charlie Hansen were there some place. Language being a barrier I did find out from Adolph St. Pierre (then a baker in Wanham) that a Dane, Martin Bode lived south and east



The Christensen family. Back Row, Left to Right: Lysffaard (Lusco) and Esther. Front Row: John and Margaret.

of Wanham. I walked out there carrying my luggage which was no problem. I was fortunate to get work for Charlie Geller (a farmer) wages going \$45.00 per month

which was a good wage at that time. But you can believe I worked hard, grubbing roots and cutting brush, which was summer work. During the winter I worked for Martin Bode, hauling logs to Reiswigs saw mill.

In 1933 Martin and Alix Bode left from Dunvegan by barge and made the whole trip on this barge to Great Bear Lake. Both Charlie Geller and Martin Bode were very good friends of mine. Charlie living in Wanham for many years.

I was married to Esther Sorensen in 1930, had two children, John born 1931 and Margaret born in 1935. In 1931 I bought a quarter three miles south east of Wanham. SW quarter 35, Range 3, West of 6th meridian, purchased from an old settler, Emil Mollander. This had a log shack on it that we lived in until 1948. One of our very good neighbors was Cornelius Olson and family.

In 1932 I improvised a rather shrewd shingle mill which provided many a homesteader with cheap covering for their roofs.

Entertainment was what we made it, maybe a dance at someone's house or Sunday dinner gatherings (with always the ice cream being made, "m,m") which was really good.

The 1930's were really hard times especially for the homesteader. One incident I remember going to a local merchant in Wanham for 10 pounds of sugar, (65¢ at that time) on credit but no that was not possible. With a very bad feeling I went home and picked two pails of saskatoons, brought them back and sold them to Mr. St. Pierre for 3¢ per pound and received 72¢. Going back to the merchant I got my 10 pounds of sugar (badly needed for canning some saskatoons).

CAT AND MIKE

On the humorous side. Mike Shannon a neighbor was a World War I veteran. He had received a head injury during the war. One day a neighbor informed me that Mike's cat hadn't returned home and that Mike was blaming me for killing his cat. He said I was getting 50¢ for each cat pelt. I approached Mike about it and his answer was "it doesn't matter anyway, the cat came back so we're friends again."

In the early 40's Clifford Tansem and I were in partnership on a timber berth saw mill in the Birch Hills which we operated for 5 years. Jim Rutherford doing the sawing and planning.

In 1948 I built the house that is still on the original quarter.

The first Agricultural Service Board was formed in 1953.

'FOR MEN MAY COME AND MEN MAY GO'

The Comms

Some of the early settlers did come and go, many stayed; some of these have been claimed by the 'Grim Reaper'.

August Comm, his wife and the three younger sons, Harvey, Walter and Reinhold arrived in Belloy in the

spring of 1937. A settler freight car with stock, machinery and household effects was also shipped in. They settled 20 miles south east of Belloy, on the flat along the Smoky River.

Dad had bought a quarter the previous fall with 40 acres under cultivation. It had a log house, a few other crude shelters, and a well on it. With muscle power, axe, grub-hoe, and horses to pull the breaking plow, the acreage soon increased.

Rain was scarce the first few years and crops were poor. The fall of 1940 was rewarding. One small five acre field of new breaking yielded 65 bushels of wheat per acre. Grain prices were on the up trend and in general the economy improved.

The grim task that winter, was getting the grain to the elevator. It was a hard pull for the horses to haul the loads from the flat up the steep, winding trail to the top of the hill; so the loads were taken up one day and the next morning, dark and early, with the team well rested, the long cold trip to town was made. Harvey bore the brunt of this job and made many long, cold trips.

The first Saturday in September of 1941, the house was destroyed by fire. Fortunately Reinhold and neighbors, Rudolf Boettcher and Willie Schultz, saw the smoke and arrived in time to save most of the clothes, beds, and bedding. All the kitchen contents were gone.



The Comm family in 1925. Reinold, the youngest, is absent - arrived one year later. Back Row: Martha, Ben, Mary, Christine, Dan, Harvey - Dad holding Walter, Mother and Esther.

THE COMMUNITY RALLIED

The next day a makeshift kitchen and bedroom was set up in one of the granaries. The hayloft offered additional 'Sealy Mattress' comfort. Immediately loans were made to build a frame house. Day after day men with hammers and saws came to help. In less than three weeks we were again comfortably housed, and this time our house had a good brick chimney. During all this time the weather did not permit harvesting, but before the end of October everyone was able to get the crops in.

Mr. Comm gradually went into retirement. He died at the age of 70 on June 16, 1949. Mother Comm died December 4, 1975, just 7 weeks before her 95th birthday. Seven out of the nine children at one time or another

farmed in the area, and eighteen of the twenty-five grandchildren were born in Grande Prairie, but have since scattered around the globe.

Dan was the trail blazer. He arrived at Peoria in the spring of 1935. After several years of farming and working in the woods and sawmills during the winter, he went trucking on the Alaska Highway. His daughter, Mrs. Harvery Dick, still lives in Peoria. Dan has retired at Blackfalds, Alberta.

Bandford Teed was married to Christine, and settled in Heart Valley in the winter of 1936. His son, Vern, still farms in the Wanham district.

Dave Littman, married to Mary, had a farm on the banks of the Smoky river in the district referred to as the Smoky. He ran a small sawmill cutting timbers for the railway and many a load was hauled to the side tracks at Codesa. He also cut shingles, which had a ready sale among the early settlers. He was also engaged in the moving business. Cancer claimed him March 3, 1959. At present Mary is living in Creston, B.C.

Walter, too, owned land and lived in the district for many years but he gave it up in favor of an education. He and his wife have been in the service of the Seventh-day Adventist church as teachers, and he also served as pastor. They spent several years in the Caribbean on the Cayman Islands and Jamaica. For eight years they taught at Philippine Union College in Manila, and have recently taken up residence at Riverside, California.

Reinhold practised mixed farming, raising turkeys and fryers was his specialty. He is now in Creston, B.C., operating a Rest Home. His son finished medicine and is interning at White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles. Trudy, a registered nurse, is working at Mala Mula Mission in Africa.

Harvey became the stable farmer of the family. He took over when his dad was ready to quit. Harvey's son, Garth, is still a thriving farmer while Grant divides his interests between farming and auctioneering at Fort St. John, B.C..

Harvey claimed Helen Rambo as his bride. In turn, Mrs Rambo and her girls followed and lived in Peoria. Lillian taught at the East Peoria School. Elsie and her husband, Chris Weis farmed. Chris was active in prompting various community projects, especially in bringing in the electric line.

I (Esther) arrived in late fall of 1938. I lived with my parents and for three years - about 200 times a year - I walked 2 miles from the flat (don't forget the big hill) to teach school. The enrollment varied but one year I had grades 1 to 8 and 14 pupils. The colder the morning, the earlier I'd arrive to start the fire in the airtight heater. Some mornings the riverflat would boast a cool -30° F.

In 1945 after several years of absence I and my husband, Harold Robertson, returned. Our agriculture lease was N 1/2 S. 16-T.76-R1-W6., only one half mile north of the school and church seemed to be the heart of the community. Harold Robertson was killed in a highway accident west of Edmonton October 14, 1969.

Hard work improved the place, but the roads were something else. A grade was eventually built to the north corner of our place and south of us to the school. This one mile was skipped because of a couple swampy

muskegs, and we were between them. In April of 1957 our third and final arrived. We had to leave the pickup 1/2 mile from home. I carried five day old Brian and arrived home with my boots full of water and wet to my knees.

As an Alberta pioneer, a tribute is due to Mother Comm. She arrived at Leduc May, 1894, at the age of 13. Edmonton, a bustling trading post, boasted a cable ferry as its only means of crossing the river. Many times she and her father walked 5 miles to Leduc carrying baskets of eggs, cream and butter. They returned carrying flour and other supplies.

She married in 1900, raised a family of nine and like many a frontier wife worked in every phase of farm life. She lived a humble Christian life and looked forward to the grand Reunion from which there will be no parting. She had little formal schooling. Her philosophy may be likened to that of the poet:

The old order changeth giving place to new
And God fulfills himself in many ways--
But thou, if thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul.

A.E. COX

by Sam Parlee

A.E. Cox filed on the south half of 23-76-3 on the seventh of May, 1919.

'A.E.' was an Englishman who had received his education in London, and had seen active service in the first world war.

He lived with Pete McNee at first and the two men were evidently deeply attached to each other, yet with decidedly opposing views. Pete had great drive and ambition, a man of strong character and powerful frame. 'Cox' as Pete called him, played it rather cool and seemed to require the dominant influence of his Scottish counterpart. To those who knew them best it was quite



The bachelors meet at the Fimrite's home. Front Row, Left to Right: Harry Moss, Penny Fimrite, Hans Mortensen, and Albert Cox. Back Row: Lester Olsen and Charlie Gummerson.

evident that here were two people who, though they had difficulty in getting along, could not get along without each other.

SWOLLEN WATERS

Mr. Cox was fording the Burnt River with team and wagon, when his box began to float. He had no alternative but to take a firm grip on his lines and get out on the doubletrees and let the box go down stream. He made it through with the running gear and team, minus his wagon box!

Electing "A.E." to the executive of the local farmers union, having him take part in the Christmas programs and certain social functions in the community, gave this man of culture and dignity some recompense and pleasure for all the contribution he was willing and able to make.

Mr. Cox sold his farm to Cecil Lalonde in 1945, and moved to a little house in Wanham where he lived for about six years. He finally went to the home for war veterans in Edmonton. When he died, he was buried in a veteran's plot in that city.

ALBERT COX

by Olive Webber

HALF AND HALF

Albert Cox came from London, England, and farmed N.E. of Peter McNee. He lived with the two McNees the first year, sharing everything half and half. At times they disagreed. The story goes that one Christmas they decided to have a roast chicken. Mr. McNee figured that since it was Christmas, the chicken should be divided in thirds, a third for Cox and a third each for the two McNees. Cox had his idea - he believed it should be divided half and half. It wasn't long after this that Mr. Cox moved into a shack of his own.

SUCH IS LIFE

After batching for a few years he started corresponding with a lady from the Free Press 'Lonely Hearts Club'. After exchanging letters for some time, he sent her money for a railway ticket to come out and keep house for him, with marriage in view. After waiting some time for her arrival, he realized he had been 'taken'.

Mr. Cox was noted for being Santa Claus at the first Christmas gathering in the district, which was at the home of Jack and Marie McLean. He was Santa for many years at the school Christmas concerts. Needless to say, most children knew who Santa was very early in life, as Mr. Cox brought with him a very Cockney accent. After selling his farm, in 1947 he retired to Wanham, and passed away in Edmonton where he is buried.

MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM DAVIS

by the youngest son, Albert

They lived in the Blackfalds and Blindman District



Mr. and Mrs. William Davis and Joyce - 1940.

from 1918 to 1927. In the spring of 1927 they put the crop in on the farm in the Blindman District. Then they moved two car loads of horses and machinery up to the Wanham District where he homesteaded. Mr. Davis and two of his sons lived in a tent for part of the summer till they got a small building put up to live in. This building was only 14 x 20 and 10 feet high walls, where, with the peaked roof, they could make an upstairs in it. This building had to be good enough for winter. They also put a fence and a log barn with a straw roof. Then Mr. Davis left the two sons to look after the place while he went back to take off the crop in the Blindman District. After he got the crop all off and sold he loaded up the rest of his machinery, cattle, horses and the old dog on two more rail road cars and said good bye to the Blackfalds District and left for Wanham. That was November. When we loaded the cars it was really warm weather, but by the time we got to Edmonton it was 40 below zero. Mrs. Davis, and Bessie the daughter left on the passenger train. Mr. Davis and youngest son Albert came in the box car with the stock and believe you me that was a cold trip but we made it ok. When we reached Wanham we unloaded the box cars and started out for the farm. We led the horses and herded the cows. It wasn't too hard to bring the cows out because the snow was so deep outside of the sleigh tracks, that the cows would not leave the sleigh tracks. The farm was only nine miles from Wanham but to me (Albert) it seemed to be a lot farther. But still by dark we got there and got the cows and horses inside of the fence.

In the coming spring we all went out to clear land and got it ready to break. We also broke some land that spring and seeded it to oats for feed. That was a good crop and we had feed for all winter off that spring breaking. Then the next year Art and Harry went in partnership with Dad on a model L Case tractor and breaking plow and they broke up about one hundred and thirty acres between themselves besides doing some breaking for others to make their payment on the outfit. And that same winter we all went together to build the school and Bessie and I (Albert) had to go to school.

Then after that the hungry thirties set in, so all anyone could do was to work hard for a living so we worked any place there was a few cents, and we gave all our earnings



Albert and Marion Davis and Joyce - 1943.

to Dad to keep food on the table, which mostly consisted of moose meat and potatoes but we really lived well and happy through it all. Then we worked also to put the road through to Wanham. We pulled the stumps with our stump puller and one horse on the sweep. Then still in the hungry thirties there was an addition to the family, a little "miss." In 1933 Virginia arrived, she was a real lovely little one. She was loved by all.

Then things went pretty good for a few years then in 1937 another little "miss" arrived in the family that was the last one - Winnifred. So Winnifred and Virginia went to school in Peoria. Also in 1937 Bessie married Mr. Ted Henry and they made their home in West Vale about eight miles from home. Then in 1938 I (Albert) married Marion Best and made our home six miles east and 2 miles south of home. Then in 1939 in November Art married Virginia Bruce and they made their home one half mile west of home and in December of the same year Harry married Martha Bohnke and they made their home one half mile east of home. Then in 1940 Harry and I went out cutting logs in the bush and we worked together for a few years. We bought a sawmill and operated it in Gordondale for seven years and in that time we both had a family started and the oldest ones were ready to go to school. So we sold the sawmill and went back farming. Then I went out on brushing crews for the Department of Highways. In 1959 I took on the operation of the maintainer for the Peoria area, and have been there ever since. Harry moved to B.C. and put up a house and has worked there ever since. Arthur retired but has his land yet. Winifred married Mr. Harley Smith and they have six children. Virginia married Dennis Danielison and has

six children, Bessie and Ted have two children, Stella and Cecil. Harry had two boys Wilfred and Oran. Arthur had two Edith and Bruce. I (Albert) had three girls, Joyce, Terry and Shirley. Virginia and Winifred's children and Cecil are not married as yet.

At the present time there has only been three of the family pass away.

William Davis passed away in 1963 at the age of 80 years. He was laid to rest in the Wanham cemetery.

Mrs. William Davis passed away in 1973 at the age of 82 years and was laid to rest in the Wanham cemetery.

Bessie Henry passed away in 1975 she also was laid to rest in the Wanham cemetery.

I am sure that all the names mentioned in this story will be well remembered by all the people of this district and for miles around.



The Davis family - Albert, Art, Harry, Virgie, Bessie and Winnie.

HARRY DAVIS STORY

Harry came to Peoria with his parents and brothers Art and Albert and sister Bessie. His father, Bill, heard about this area from William Rottacker while he was living at Blackfalds Alberta. He moved here in June of 1927. Bill Davis was a blacksmith in addition to his farming. He was also the local vet and travelled the community stallion for a period.

The Davis boys soon obtained land of their own and Harry took taxidermy lessons from Emil Dick and began mounting birds and small animals in his spare time.

Harry recalls a hair raising experience he had while working with a horse that was to be operated on. Harry got tangled in the ropes being used to secure the horse and was drug around the yard until most of his clothing had been torn off. About the same time as he broke from the ropes Mrs. Elmer Johnson (Vera) came into the yard. She took one look at Harry and fainted.

Another narrow escape came in 1956 while Harry was working in a sawmill at Lumley. His pant leg got caught in the power take off of the mill and his pants and socks were torn off. Though badly bruised he only laid off for

two days.

Harry's parents adopted two little girls in the early 30's and thus Harry obtained two new sisters.

In 1939 Harry married Martha Bohnke in a double wedding ceremony. The second bridal couple were Louis Kozak and Bertha Bohnke. The wedding was held in the Alex Dopher home.

Harry and Martha have two sons: 1. Wilfred who is married and has a family and works at Victory Motors in Kelowna. 2. Oran who is also married and has a family. He runs the Davis Plumbing Company also in Kelowna.

Martha and Harry sold out their holdings in Peoria and are now living in Kelowna full time.



*Budd and Carmen
Dennis.*

BUDD DENNIS STORY

by Carmen Dennis

Budd and I left Meeting Creek, Alberta early in the morning on June 11, 1947 taking our lunch with us, and driving in our home-made 'Heinzmobile' the long miles to Belloy, Alberta. It was a long dusty trip - very different from today's paved roads. We arrived at Belloy about twenty-four hours later, and made our way, that evening to our first gospel service which was held in the old West Vale School. Services were held there until a new church was built. On the grounds of the West Vale church building we also had a graveyard. Many memories are tied up around that little church - good times and sad times - and in it all we know that God was loving and merciful. Many Sundays saw the church packed to the doors. They were good years. Then, as many moved away from the area it was felt that Wanham should become the centre of the work. With much work and excitement the old Mumby house was moved to Wanham and was used as a church for 20 years.

We moved from Belloy to Peace River in September 1954. It was a hard thing to leave so many dear friends, but we felt it was God's plan for us. The work in Wanham has continued and grown, and now has a lovely new church. We look back on those seven years as the very best years of our lives. We learned much - gained so many friends who still are very dear to us. Many are gone - Mr. and Mrs. Parlee Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Mumby, Robert Parlee, Tom Parlee, Paul and Carl Nagel, Harry Scott, Mr. Gliege and others. Those who were children when we arrived at Belloy are parents - we are grandparents. Time



*Back Row: John, Lavina, Helen. Front Row: Harvey and
Harold. Inset: Richard.*

hurries by - life is like that. May we all redeem the time until the Lord returns and be ready for that time.

JOHN DICK

(As told to Connie Dick by Mrs. John (Helen) Dick)

John was born in Odessa, Russia, of German origin on May 6, 1899, and moved with his family to the U.S.A. - North Dakota, when John was about one year old.

In 1908, the Dick family joined a special immigrant train of thirteen families with their household things, livestock and equipment, bound for Alberta. It made a train of 34 box cars, women and children in passenger cars, and the men with the livestock.

I, (Helen) was born in Hinckley, Minnesota, U.S.A. on April 22, 1902. My parents were Charles and Freda Wendland. In 1914, on my twelfth birthday, the Wendlands moved to Beiseker by train.

Times had been hard in Minnesota, but when we moved to Beiseker, there were good crops and gardens. To reward his family for enduring hard times, my father bought apples by the barrel, bananas by the bunch, and cookies by the case. Wheat was selling for \$2.40 a bushel.

John and I were married on November 7, 1922 in the Conference office in Calgary by Elder O. Ziprick. While we lived in the Beiseker area, three children were born ... Lavina, Harold and Harvey.

Land in the area had been settled, and not much more was available, so we decided to move to Peoria. My brothers, John and George Wendland had already moved there seven years earlier. John went on the train with our household things and livestock and machinery, all in one box car. The trip took four days. One cow freshened on the trip so John milked her. The horses found it hard to stand up, so at McLennan John got some ashes and spread them on the floor so the horses could stand up. He had six horses and four cows, along with some chickens. This was in November, 1936.

John had made the trip to Peoria before we moved, at which time he made a down payment on some land and found a place to live. He had \$30.00 cash in his pocket when he arrived in Wanham, but had to pay that before he could unload the box car at Wanham. He had bought a Hudson Bay quarter for \$8.00 an acre. (\$12.00 with

interest) The place he had arranged to live in was the Epp place, one and a half miles east of Peoria. Land location of the place he bought ... SE 1/4 20-2-76-W6. The children and I came one week later by train. We were met by John Wendland with a rubber-tired trailer and he took us to his home. There had been a thaw, then it froze again so the roads were rutted and frozen, the ruts being almost as deep as the wagon wheels. John's wife had supper ready for us.

On the Epp place, there were three granaries moved together, and one had some grain stored in it. We had brought some heavy grey paper along, also some linoleum, so we papered the walls and covered the floors. I made some curtains, and it was home. John had set up an airtight heater, and we put up the cookstove and beds.

NO STOCK FEED

There was no feed available, not even straw. The cow that had freshened on the train dried up because of the lack of good feed. So our family was without milk and cream. I remember having to put Crisco on the bread in place of butter. The horses got so poor that in spring, two couldn't stand up. John made a sling for one to keep her off her feet. Mr. Rottacker gave us some oats but it didn't last long. By spring we had lost two horses due to lack of good feed. They laid down and couldn't get up again.

During the winter, there was no fence to hold livestock. I remember tying the horses together and leading them to Lawrence Toftner's dug-out to drink. The water was dark and colored and had an odor, but the livestock drank it.



The John Dick Family. Standing, Left to Right: Harvey, Richard, Lavina and Harold. Seated: Helen and John.

John Wendland shot a moose and gave us a hind quarter which we hung in the porch, and cut steaks whenever we wanted. Once Mrs. Pete Reiswig came to visit and for lunch we had rice, bread and postum.

In the spring we moved to the Martin place, just one-half mile south of our place, and lived there for the summer while our house was being built. John hauled logs to W.J. Rottacker's sawmill where they were sawed into lumber to build with.

That first summer the crops and gardens were good. We had 20 acres broke on the land and it was seeded to

wheat and a little oats for horse feed. Cash was needed to pay \$100.00 on the land. The end of July, there was a killing frost which froze our garden and crop.

One summer, it was so dry, we had to go to the bottom of the creek to dig a well for water. One day John and Emil Gleige found the spring that we know as the Belloy spring, and is still used as a source of drinking water for many people.

IT'S A BOY!

After the first year, things were better. We had chickens and eggs, cows milk, cream and butter. Berries grew along the creek, and many people picked and canned them.

George and Ann Wendland lived 1/2 mile east of our place, but two deep creeks separated us. This didn't create a problem, though. We had a well worn path between us. We had a signal set up. Something black against the barn was an invitation to come over. George had a radio and we didn't, so in the winter of 1943, when a baby was due at the Dick's, we set up a signal system again. The radio station carried a program giving hospital bulletins and messages from hospital patients, to families at home. I went to the hospital by train, and it was pre-arranged if a boy arrived, George would put a certain color, and another if it was a girl. In this way the family at home found out that the new baby was a boy - Richard. George often brought the mail from Belloy, and again, on the right signal we would go to their place for our mail.

LOGGERS

One evening while George Wendlands were visiting with us, everyone was having a good time in the house while Richard and Garry were busy in the logging business outside. John and I had planted a nice row of spruce trees, and the little boys decided to chop them down and load them in the wagon!

Horses were an important part of Farmer John's life. He used them for farming until 1958. He was one of the last of the farmers to give up farming with horses. He used his tractor to work up the land then seeded by means of four horses. He bought a horse from Dan Reiswig and another from John Kandt, and a team - Chub and Fly, at Sam Lee's auction sale, Tony, from Ceisslars, and Silver, from Frank Siemens.

On October 3, 1957, it snowed about two feet and all the crops were out. John and George had their crops in stooks, so the men spent days to dig out enough stooks to thresh so they would have feed for their livestock for winter.

One day that fall, John got up at 4:00 a.m., and rode his horse, Silver, to Belloy, where he boarded the train for Spirit River to pay his taxes so his land wouldn't come up for tax sale. The same day, he took the train back to Belloy and rode his horse home again. It was a very long, tiresome trip.

In December, 1949, John bought his first and only tractor, an AR John Deere, with hydraulic plow from Alex Sandercock in Wanham. The tractor and plow cost

him \$2600.00, and is still in good running condition.

Several years ago, we bought a house in the hamlet of Peoria and still live there. Richard and his family live on the home place.

We have been members of the Peoria Seventh Day Adventist Church, and have held offices in the church. There was a church building when we moved here, and we saw the building of a new one in the mid forties, and now another new one is in the process of being built.

In 1957, though the crops were under snow, the family, along with my mother, Freda Wendland, had a supper celebrating our 35th anniversary. In November, 1972, we celebrated our Golden wedding anniversary with a supper for the families, and the community helped to celebrate in the evening. In November, 1979, we celebrated our 57th anniversary with our children and as many grandchildren as possible.

Our children, Lavina, Harold, Harvey, and Richard are all married and live on farms just a few miles from us. Besides our four children, we have 13 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



John and Helen on their 50th wedding anniversary.

HAROLD DICK STORY

by Elaine Dick

I was born in Beiseker, Alberta on September 26, 1928. I moved to Peoria with my parents in 1936 when I was 8 years old.

My sister Lavina and I attended the Mersey school which was located where the hamlet of Peoria is now. We lived four and a half miles from school and we often walked. In the winter time we drove a cutter or rode horseback.

While I was growing up I spent a large part of my time hunting and trapping. When I was about 14, rabbits were very plentiful. The mink farmers near Slave Lake would pay 3 cents for a frozen carcass. A sleigh box of rabbits was worth \$12. I still enjoy the outdoor life, hunting and



Harold Dick's first home - built by Charlie Leggatt.

fishing in particular.

I worked with my father on the farm until 1949 when I obtained a quarter of land for myself. That same year I married Elaine MacDonald (the local school teacher). We have lived on the farm ever since.

We have four children:

Wayne, a schoolteacher, married Gail Kallis of Olds and they live in Silver Valley where they both teach.

Barry, a geophysicist, married the former Linda Urness of Belloy. They live in Calgary.

Laurie, our only daughter, is a registered nurse.

Greg is still at home attending high school.



Harold Dick family. Back Row: Harold, Wayne, Gail and Barry. Middle Row: Elaine, Laurie, Linda. Front Row: Greg.

HARVEY DICK FAMILY

by Connie Dick

Harvey was three years old when his family moved from Beiseker to Peoria. He went to school at Peoria and East Peoria schools.

He always liked machines and in his late teens began operating a 'Cat' working for Warren and W.J. Rotacker. They were clearing land in the summer and skidding trees for the sawmill during the winter. This led

him to work for Jacobson Brothers at Horsefly, B.C., for 2 years and to Silver Valley for Rottackers. Then Harvey and Ed Reiman owned and operated a D6 'Cat' for four years; for Littmans at Kinuso, Maissoneuves at Silver Valley and did some work for farmers during the summer.

Harvey married Connie Comm in July, 1955, and started farming in 1956 when he bought a half-section of land from Roy Leverington - a pioneer in the Peoria District. The first year Harvey farmed with his dad. Harvey worked the fields with the tractor and his father seeded with four horses

A few years later Harvey got his private pilots license and bought a 150 Cessna airplane and enjoys flying for fun and relaxation.

Harvey and Connie have 3 children: Wallace, Darwin and Coralynn. They are members of the Peoria-Smoky S.D.A. Church and have taken an active part in church, school and community planning. They still live and farm in Peoria.



This is the Dofher family shortly after arrival at Wanham. Left to Right: Martin, Dad, Mother, Almeda and Vi.

DOFHER

by Gus Dofher

My family and I came from Cluny, sixty-five miles south-east of Calgary, and moved to the Peace River District in November, 1930 to Wanham. My dad, Anton, took a homestead south-west of Wanham on NW 6-77-R3. My brother Alex had moved the year before, so we stayed with him as we were building Dad's and Mother's log house. It was mild that winter and very little snow. We thought "what a wonderful north country," but that was the only winter like that in all of the thirty-one years that I lived in Wanham. The following summer my brother Alex and I built a log building two stories high. The top floor was a woodworking shop and the lower floor a blacksmith shop. I was ready to do wood-work and carpentry. I made windows and frames, doors and frames, mostly in the winter. In summer I did carpenter work, building homes for the homesteaders - mostly from logs. Once in awhile I drifted as far as Grande Prairie and did some building. One house I built at Clairmont was from 4 x 8 planks - tongue and groove - it made a very strong house. In 1935 I filed on a homestead that Henry



Gus and Mary Dofher taken shortly after their marriage in 1937.

Ladner had been holding for five years and had never proved up. After five years he gave it up. It was the NW 31-T 76-R3. I did build me a log house on it and a log barn. In the summer of 1937 I went to Denver, Colorado and married myself a wife. We lived on the homestead but I did not farm. I stayed with carpentry - building houses and other buildings as well. Alex and Dad did the farming of the few acres that was cleared. During World War II I worked for the Government in a War Industry building aeroplanes. My wife Mary was alone on the farm.

In the year 1957 I built the Woking Hotel, which I understand is moved to Wanham. In 1952 I sold my farm and bought two lots in the town of Wanham, moved my house and shop to town and shortly after that built the Eaglesham Hotel - twenty five miles east by the road.

I should have mentioned earlier in this story, that in earlier years I also made coffins to bury the dead. My father died in December 1941; I also made his coffin and that was one of the hardest things to make. Mother went to live with my brother Alex. My two sisters had gotten married by then and had homes of their own.

After I built the Eaglesham Hotel I got work with the Spirit River School Division. For two years I built schools and then I became the Work Superintendent for the Division until the winter of 1960-61. The School Division gave me my walking papers and no reason. But the new Superintendent hired me again on the "spot", and I stayed with him till summer. That summer my wife and I went on a holiday to the Coast and bought a piece of land. We came back and sold our house in Wanham, had an auction sale and sold everything. We moved to the town of Haney, which was later renamed Maple Ridge, B.C. That was in the Fall of 1961 and we are still in Maple Ridge and I believe we will stay.

ALEX EDEY FAMILY

In November, 1931, Alex and Margaret Edey left

Carmangay, Alberta, and travelled by train to Wanham, Alberta, where they had taken out a homestead on the north side of Kadot Lake in the West Vale District.

Jim Edey, (Alex's brother) had moved there the year before. He was to meet us, but hadn't got his mail for weeks, so there was no one to meet us. But George Turner and Jim Munro had brought a load of wood into Wanham School, and they said they would take us out.

We all arrived at Jim's late at night. He lived in a little log shack about 12' x 12'.

George Turner and Jim Munro said they would be back in the morning. The first thing George did was to go out, and two hours had a moose for us. Then they cut logs and helped build us a log house.

We lived in West Vale for a few years, then moved to Heart Valley where Alex rented the Pete MacDonald's place, and later bought it. Then Ralph Pringle, Eileen's husband filed on a homestead in Heart Valley and they moved there. They moved to Grande Prairie in 1952, and to Pouce Coupe in 1955 where they still live. They have 4 sons - Dale, Ronald, Wayne and Lyle, and three grandchildren.



Ray, Uncle Ned and Eileen Edey in front of their West Vale home.

THE ALEX EDEY FAMILY

(by Mary Olinger)

Mr. and Mrs. Edey and seven of their eight children arrived in Wanham of November 1, 1931 from Carmangay, Alberta. The temperature was 30 degrees below zero F. Jim Munro who happened to be in town, loaded all of us into his sleigh and hauled us out to Kadot Lake where Alex's brother, Jim, (a bachelor) had a very small one room shack. That is where all but one son, Gordon, stayed until a house was built on the homestead.

The family consists of: - *Margaret Preston*, the oldest, who stayed in Calgary; *Gordon*, who rode the rods to Carmangay to try to get work; *Charlie*, who later homesteaded at Heart Valley; *Jack*, who still lives on the Heart Valley farm, (formerly the old Pete MacDonald farm); *Mary Olinger*, who lives in Kelowna, B.C.; *Eileen Pringle*, who lives in Pouce Coupe; *Raymond*, who lives in Grande Prairie; and *Jean*, who is a Nun with the Sisters of Providence in Vancouver.

It is very hard to write about the first winter. It was



The Edey family taken in 1957. Standing, Left to Right: Jack, Raymond, Mary, Sr. Jean, Charlie and Gordon. Seated: Eileen, Dad, Mom and Margaret.

dreadful, as the cattle and sheep Alex had brought up from Carmangay died. The slough grass was not what they had been used to. The first winter, we lost nearly all the stock. The food got very low, as did the money. For the first two winters, we lived mostly on frozen potatoes bought from the Bohnke's and grouse and rabbits even on Christmas Day!

We attended school at West Vale. Alice Hawkinson was our teacher. She later married Arthur Johnston, and then came Sylva, who married George Tracy. Both teachers were very kind. The neighbors, Chapins, Gulicks, Olsons, Monroes, Tracys, Johnstons and many more were unbelievably kind. We also received boxes of clothing from former neighbors at Carmangay that saw us through the winters.

We seldom got to town, (Wanham) but when we did, Harringtons, Lerigers, Girards and later Jacobsons and many others were wonderfully kind. Just because we had so little does not mean we were unhappy. We had a very happy time, and have many good memories of those years.

Mrs. Margaret Edey passed away in Vancouver in 1958. Alex later remarried and lives in Vancouver. Gordon and his wife Dorothy reside with them. Alex is now 90 years old. Jim Edey resided at his homestead beside Kadot Lake until rheumatism forced him to go into a rest home in Grande Prairie, where he died some years ago. I'm sure his life was shortened by the fact that we all moved in with him until our house was built - being a bachelor and I think, not too fond of a bunch of kids, it must have been very hard on him.

There were many humorous times, but most of them are too personal to publish.

CHARLIE EDEY

Alex Edey, wife Margaret and family - Margaret, 21; Gordon, 19; Charlie, 17; Jack, 15; Mary, 13; Eileen, 11; Raymond, 9; and Jean, 7, came from Carmangay, Alberta, and landed in Wanham in November, 1931. Michael Murphy, (Margaret's brother) who had made his home with them, came as part of the family. It was extremely cold weather.



Charlie, a cousin from Calgary, and Jack at West Vale.

Alex, Margaret and son Gordon had filed on homesteads at Kadot Lake. They lived with James Edey, (Alex's brother) until their house was built, aided by Jim Munro. Alex rented Jim and Ken Munro's farm land until they had sufficient land broken on their homesteads. The Edey's were the first to bring sheep into the area. (West Vale)

COAL MINE

Jim Munro, George Turner and Alex Edey opened up a coal mine in the Saddle Hills. They hauled coal into Wanham, Belloy, Rycroft and a couple of loads to Spirit River, all by horses. The mine was eventually abandoned because of the sandstone roof.

Trapping rats and logging also brought in some equity in those days. Gordon and Charlie helped Dan Gulick and wife who lived across the lake, with their haying and cattle branding.

CHURCH TIME

On Sundays, weather permitting, Alex would harness the team to the wagon and drive his family the 14 miles to Wanham to attend church.

Margaret Edey did all her own spinning, which she knitted into garments for her family. Bread had to be baked every other day to feed a large family. Wheat was hauled to Sexsmith to be ground into flour.

Charlie Edey's two older children were both born in the log shack on the homestead. On February 14, 1938, Gordon brought the Wanham nurse out to Heart Valley by team and sleigh (about 15 miles in those days.) The nurse slept that night with Charlie's wife, as baby Joyce did not arrive until the next day. The drum heater was kept red in those days.

On February 26, 1939, the same extreme weather, Charlie's second child, Douglas arrived. He was delivered by that kind, compassionate lady, Mrs. Norman MacDonald. (Gertie) This was the second last baby she delivered in Heart Valley. Then there was that kindly soul, Mrs. Lawrence Rosinsky, (Martha) who helped take care of mother, baby and house.

A MERCY FLIGHT

There was the time that Grant McConachee, a bush pilot married to Margaret McLean, flew down to Heart Valley to pick up his mother-in-law, Mrs. Bill MacLean, who was extremely ill, and flew her to Grande Prairie Hospital.

After the second world war, Gordon, Jack, Eileen and Ralph Pringle all acquired land in Heart Valley with the soldier grants.

Charlie and Jean Edey moved to Wanham in 1950 to further their children's education, and later to Grande Prairie.

It was in Wanham that Joyce joined the Canadian Girls in Training group. Later, after four years of training, she became the first C.G.I.T. girl to graduate in Grande Prairie.

Margaret is married to Sid Preston, and they reside in Calgary. Gordon and Dorothy are presently residing in Heart Valley.

Charlie and Jean Edey reside in Grande Prairie, (still own Heart Valley property).

Jack resides in Heart Valley, where he farms.

Mary is married to John Olinger, and they reside in Kelowna, B.C.

Eileen joined the army and is now married to Ralph Pringle and they reside in Pouce Coupe, B.C. (still own Heart Valley property).

Raymond married Theresa Le Blanc, a former Heart Valley girl, and they reside in Grande Prairie. They have three girls.

Jean, (Sister Jean) is a nursing sister at the Holy Cross Hospital, Vancouver, B.C.

Margaret Edey passed away in 1959 at Vancouver. Alex Edey passed away in 1978 at Vancouver.

N.B. In the early days there was much confusion because of mail distribution to the North and South Bad Heart. So the North Bad Heart was changed to Heart Valley.

GORDON EDEY AND FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Edey and family came to Kadot Lake to homestead in 1931 from Carmangay, Alberta. The children attended school at West Vale and Heart Valley.

My family, the Nustads came to LaGlance, Alberta in 1923, and later came to Bad Heart, Alberta to homestead.

Gordon Edey and I were married June 26, 1940, and he went overseas in July, 1940, returning June 19, 1945.

We took V.L.A. land in Heart Valley and farmed ten years when he had to have a back operation. He drove a school bus for 4 years out of Sexsmith and then moved to Dawson Creek where he was a mechanic for Cockshutt. Later he was a partsman after having another disc removed during another back operation.

We have two children: Lorne, who is a sheet metal worker, and Linda in Toronto, with the Commerce bank.

A year ago, at 65, Gordon went to help his father move to Vancouver and spent six months with them. On June 28, 1978, we came back to Heart Valley and have resided with Gordon's brother Jack on the farm.

On August 7th, 1950, there was a snow storm which put the crops down flat. We had to go to work for the winter. I went to Edmonton, and Gordon to Redwater, Alberta.

A.O. ELHORN AND FAMILY "PROJECTORS"

Al came to Wanham November 21, 1946, with the "O.B. Lassiter Clearing Project". This was a government land clearing project for veterans. They drew land numbers from an office in Peace River town. We drew a half section on the highway 9 1/2 miles east of Wanham. At that time, it was a dirt road with lots of pot holes.



Raymond, Jim, Bert, Arlene and Gary - 1957.



Al, Ruth, Jim and Raymond Elhorn - 1949.

We moved from our home in Edmonton in September, 1950, at which time we had three sons: Raymond, James and Herbert. Arlene was born in 1957 and Gary in 1953.

We left Edmonton in a 3 ton truck loaded down with all our belongings. The roads were poor and it was supposed to be a 375 mile trip with ferry crossing at Watino. We got to the ferry to find it was out for repairs and no sign to warn people. So back to Triangle we drove then through Grande Prairie and to the farm. Instead of arriving here at 3:30 p.m. we arrived at midnight - three tired boys and two exhausted parents.

I soon learned that water doesn't always come from a tap, you don't always switch lights on and it didn't just take a match to light a stove. I finally learned to pump up lamps, clean the chimney, build a wood stove fire - which I might add needs kindling and careful attention. It can get mighty cold if you don't, I know. Oh, I also learned to make bread. Al refused to buy bread. He said he felt dumb as he was the only man buying bread. All the other wives made bread. I learned later it was a bluff.

Al resigned his foreman's job with Lassiters in May, 1951. He bought a milk cow, team of horses and got

chickens. The barn was brought from south of Wanham November, 1951. Then as Jim said, "now it's a really farm".

The winters of '50 and '51 were the worst with snow, snow and blizzards but that didn't compare with mud, water and mosquitoes in the spring and summer. We stuck it and we are still farming.

Oh! Power came in June 1955 for a price and propane replaced wood in 1962.

Raymond lives in Cassiar, B.C., and is married to a New Zealand girl, Mary (Line). She came over to nurse at the hospital in Cassiar. They have three children: Kate, Warwick and Russell.

James lives in Beaverlodge, Alberta, and is married to Bonnie (Abbing) from Dawson Creek, B.C. They have one son, Darren.

Sgt. Herbert (Bert to us, Herb to his wife Peggy (Latter) and all his service buddies) at present is in Kingston, Ontario. They have two children, Wesley and Trinity. Colin passed away November 9, 1979. Peggy is from a farm near Calgary.

Arlene is married to Robert Barlund and they farm at Eckville, Alberta. They have two children, Scott and Christy.

Gary is married to Jeanie (Gaffney) from Vancouver, B.C. They have two sons, Christopher and Jeffrey and are living in Morinville, Alberta.



Elhorns moving their home - 1950.

JAKE EPP AND ALBERT SUIK ANECDOTE

by Sam Parlee

I really got to know these men when they spent the winter together on Albert's homestead in the winter of '30-31. Albert was a very fine musician and was able to put a quartet together from his homesteader neighbors. We would go over there once a week and spend the evening in practice.

In the years that followed, Jake proved to have quite a bit of talent as an actor and took part in a number of plays.

When my brother Tom and I worked on a fire-fighting crew, Jake was the cook. He had been cook on a ranch which placed him in a first-rate position for the job. I'm sure that he had us all at heart and prepared a lot of food over an open fire. Bill Irvin, the foreman, confided however that Jack Hendrix's dog ought not to be eating out of the frying pan and declared that "I could do better than that when I was abatchin'."

Jake worked for a number of his neighbors throughout the years and spoke of the days when he would settle down on his own place.

"Some day I'll get some stock and a dog and not go out to work anymore." This hope did not materialize for Jake, but he did live on his place between jobs. He sold his land in 1937 to Art Murphy.

Albert Suik sold his land to Fred Birdsall. It is now owned by Alfred Hallock. Alfred and his brother Darrel live there now.

CARL ERSTAD

Carl Martin Erstad was born in Bergen, Norway, October 12, 1886. He had seven brothers and four sisters of which only two sisters survive; the oldest, Anna, in Norway, and the youngest, Marie from Seattle, Washington - present here today.

Carl first left his homeland in 1907. He returned to Norway where he spent that Christmas with his family. Once again, he bade them farewell, this time coming further north to the Spirit River area where he worked on the railroad. A short time later he took up farming 2 miles west of Wanham and has resided there for the past forty-five years.

His home was always open to anyone and no one ever left his door hungry.

He passed away at the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital, August 16 in his 77th year.

Carl (as everyone called him) will be greatly missed by his many friends both near and far.'

Read at Carl's funeral by the minister officiating, August 16, 1963.

Respectfully submitted by Fran Wells.

ALBERT EVENSON FAMILY

Early in the fall of 1934, the Evensons, with five of their family, boarded a train at Holden, Alberta, and

arrived in Edmonton where they had a meal for twenty-five cents each. Then they boarded the train once again for Belloy. They were met there by Mrs. Evenson's father, Ole Bjerkseth. Sons Arnold and Leonard followed by box car with their cattle. After arriving at Belloy, they unloaded the cattle and drove them to the Bjerkseth farm, which was located just west of the present Albert Davis farm. They farmed the Bjerkseth farm for a couple of years, then took their own homestead on the banks of the Bad Heart. Arnold and Leonard cleared and broke this land with horses.

In 1937 another son was born bringing the family to nine children. One daughter, Myrtle, passed away in childhood before they moved to the Peace country. The eldest daughter, Violet, married Hubert Sorgen and remained around Holden till 1954 when they moved to the Wanham area.

The children attended Mersey School and then East Peoria when it was built. As times were hard, children left school early. The boys worked for other homesteaders, helping clear land for one dollar a day to make a little extra money. Then the war broke out. Sons Leonard and Lloyd joined up. Arnold met and married Irene Best. He continued to help farm the homestead then finally moved to Wanham. As the girls grew up they left home to work out. Thelma married Mayther Hychuik of Heart Valley and presently lives in Wanham. Nora married Otto Olesen of Edmonton and still lives there. Mabel married Cliff Likes of Fairview and resides in St. Albert. Nina married Jack Buckly of Edmonton and that still is her home. Clifford, the last son, worked the rigs for a while. He met Evelyn Siegal of Looma and married her. His home is at South Cooking Lake, Alberta. Lloyd returned after the war and took up a homestead at Belloy. Leonard was wounded in service. After his recovery he returned to help with the farming. In 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Evenson and Leonard moved to Wanham. Albert Evenson passed away August 7, 1960 at the age of 87 years. Mrs. Mary Evenson passed away May 24, 1974, at the age of 78 years. Leonard resides in Spirit River now, after retiring from farming.

LLOYD EVENSON FAMILY

Lloyd took a homestead in the Belloy area after the war. In 1953 he rented his land out and joined the Air Force. In 1955 he met Grace Stevenson from Prince Albert while stationed at Saskatoon Air Base. They were married in 1956. In 1957, a son, Wilfred, was born in Saskatoon. In 1959 Grace decided she would like to try farming. So they left the city life for the farm.

Over the years they had six more children including two sets of twins fifteen months apart. One of the last set of twins passed away in 1968 at the age of seven months. Being a city girl, Grace was pretty busy raising a family of six, milking up to sixteen cows by hand, and stacking bales beyond counting, for a large herd of cattle. But she enjoyed every minute of it.

In 1978 they suffered the tragedy of losing their son Wilfred in a car accident. Two daughters have left home.

Lloyd and Grace are still farming with just a few livestock. They are waiting for one or two of the upcoming three sons to take over the farm so they can retire.

REMINISCING

by James Ferguson

I came into the area about five miles northeast of Belloy for the first time in July of 1930.

I was astounded at the enormous growth of red top hay which was over six feet high in all the meadows. This was on the Mike Kelly homestead of N.E. 26, my brother Henry's homestead of S.W. 36, and that of my father's of N.W. 25. A fire had gone through here several years before and a lot of the big poplar had fallen into the meadows which required a lot of work to clear.

We cut hay and it was so heavy it had to be turned several times before it was cured enough to stack. Six or seven of us worked together and we stacked over three hundred tons of hay each year for several years.

Chris Bankhead homesteaded on S.W. 35 and Steve Howard on S.E. 35. Other homesteaders were Ernest Nolde on N.E. 35. He stayed only briefly and returned to Germany about 1936. Emil Ensried was on N.E. 36 and Arnold Christopherson on N.W. 36 but, as they abandoned their places, my brother Malcolm filed on N.W. 36 and I filed on N.E. 36 about 1938. There were others east of us: Tony Kropilnitski was on N.W. 31, on N.E. 31 was John Mazurkewich, further east was Alex Melnyk on N.W. 32 and John Bihun on N.E. 32.

Further south was John Noga on S.W. 32 along with his brother Pete, east of John. Joe Bilinski was east next to Bihun. These were the people we neighboured with in the Thirties.

I was greatly interested in this area of Section 36 and the north half Section 25 due to its hayland. We ranged cattle all through this land but as more land was taken up, we had to restrict our cattle to our own land which involved a lot of fencing. Not much progress was made in the area until after the War when brush cutters and pilers were available. Then we were able to cut and pile whole quarters at a time. The entire area northeast of Belloy was taken up, but not many roads were built until 1950 - after which most roads were upgraded. Our mode of transportation was mostly by team and wagon or saddle horse, until after the War when more cars were purchased by everyone.

Most of the people I mentioned were very close neighbours and visited often. John and Pete Noga's place was three miles directly east of my shack and we had a well beaten trail where we visited back and forth. Mike Kelly was a tremendous character who told us many interesting stories of his early days in Saskatchewan and his trips in the B.C. block prospecting for gold. He would disappear for days and come back hale and hearty from some of his prospecting jaunts.

Chris Bankhead and his dad came into the country in 1916 and we have been acquainted with them since that time. His main farm was about five miles southwest of Belloy but he spent a lot of time at his homestead.

SALT OF THE EARTH

Those original settlers were the salt of the earth; if anyone had the old pioneering spirit, they had it and lived it. If any one of us needed a hand for a couple of days either one or several were there to help and we would reciprocate when the need arose. Our groceries were not plentiful but friendship and neighbourliness was. No one left your home anywhere close to mealtime; they had to stay and share what you had. Locks on doors were unheard of; if anyone came along and found no one home, they just went in and made a meal with whatever was available, then cleaned up and went on their way. As far as thievery or vandalism was concerned, it was unheard of. All respected someone else's property.

Descendants are left only in the Ferguson Creek area but these are a far cry from the original settlers. As I sit and ponder, many times I wish it were now, like it was in pre-1940 when everyone was a friend. It's so different now: if I need something, most will say, "how much for it?" It used to be, "take it, use it, then return it". I guess that's what pioneering spirit and hospitality was all about!



Leonard and Don Hansen (the Ferguson grandchildren) with Dad's 50-110 gun.

FERGUSON, FERGIE

submitted by Margaret Wortman and Irene Hansen

My parents, two brothers, my sister Margaret and myself, (Irene), arrived here on Christmas Day, 1917, from Oregon. We brought two box cars of settlers effects with us. We were met at the train by the Selbys and Bankheads, old friends from Oregon. It was due to them that Dad had quit a good job on the railroad, (he was an engineer), and came here to this (as they described in their letters) 'wonderful country.'

We lived with the Selbys for about two months, then moved to the Hickey place. On March 18, 1918, the house burned down with almost all of our belongings up in flames with it.

About the only thing of value we saved was a 50/110 rifle that Dad had brought with him from Oregon. Believe me, that gun was important to him as not only did our food depend on it, but it was the only means of getting furs to sell for a bit of money. My son, Donnie has that gun now - a real antique.

(Margaret continues the story --)

After the fire, Dad "squatted" on a piece of land at Codesa, which was then called Rahab. I believe Walter Sanoski lives on that land now. It was there that he built our first home - a shack 11 x 11 ft., which housed the seven of us for the better part of a year.

MICE AND MOSQUITOES

My clearest memory of the place was the mice! We had them in droves! Irene and I used to spend our spare time spearing them. In fact we used to have a contest going to see who could spear the most in a day! Sometimes the count would mount to about fifty a day for each of us. I can't remember now who was the "Champion Stabber."

Then there were the mosquitoes. It was unbelievable! No one, unless they lived here during homesteading days in the first decade could ever understand how they were.



Margaret and Jack Culshaw.

If you had horses or cows, they would come in from pasture literally covered with them. You couldn't tell a white animal from a black one, they all looked a dirty grey, the color of the dirty little stingers. Mother used to build cheese cloth tents over our beds at night to keep them off us. It kept the mosquitoes off, but when the weather was hot we almost smothered to death. However, about four a.m. it would cool off and the mosquitoes would die down. Sleep at last!

Five a.m. Dad would let out a loud roar. It was time to get up! That meant all of us, because regardless of how young you were there was always something you had to do on the homestead. That year Dad built a new house about half a mile from where we were living. That was in



The Ferguson Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Margaret, Mr. Ferguson (Fergie). Front Row: Ted, Dale and Ronnie.

1919; how well we remember that winter! It wasn't good, because all we ate was moose meat and turnips. Our potatoes had frozen and there was absolutely no money to buy groceries of any kind - not even flour. As for clothes, we had to depend on hand-me-downs from other people. Since times were hard for everyone in those days, even the hand-me-downs were pretty scarce. The following year Dad grubbed a few acres of land with an axe and seeded it by hand, carrying a sack over his arm and distributing it by handfuls as he walked. A beautiful crop of oats appeared, but a hailstorm came and hammered it to the ground.

By this time, Mother had raised a few chickens and turkeys from eggs given to us by neighbors. All of these were killed in the same storm. Even kittens running around the yard were hammered to death by the terrible hail. That winter was just as bad as the one before, food and clothing wise.

LUMBER MILL MOVES IN

The next winter a real God-send moved into the district, by way of a sawmill! It was known as the McCrimmon Mill, and was located near where the ski-hill is now. Many homesteaders obtained work there that winter - among them, my dad. What a difference that made! We actually had a bit of money to buy essentials. The work was hard and the weather cold. I remember Dad saying that it was -75° Fahrenheit, one morning when he went to work!

(Irene continues --)

That was the year I got lucky and was able to go to school in Grande Prairie. (There were no schools where we lived.) A Mr. Mitchells came down to our place to go hunting. I guess he felt sorry for us because he offered to take me to Grande Prairie to live with his family and go to school. This I did for two winters. But for that, I would not now be able to read or write. It was a real God-send.

After working at the mill a couple of years, Dad went

back to what he loved most - hunting and trapping. One thing I find interesting is the uses he made of the moose he killed. Food was just the beginning, although the most important.

MOOSE GARB

I am sure that Dad will be best remembered in the community for his original dress - moose hide! Not only did he skin the moose carcass, but the legs were very carefully skinned, too, as these provided him with footwear. After they were skinned, he would tan the hide by rubbing salt and saltpetre on the skin. Then, carefully sewing up the end nearest the hoof to shape the foot part, he would continue on to make holes in the leg piece on either side for the laces. Thrusting his foot into the skin side of the boot, he would lace it up. Now he had warm footwear for the winter!

The hide was then taken to Spirit River where Indian people living there would tan it for him. Later he would bring it home and cut it up as carefully as any dress maker fashioning a fancy gown! Then he would sew it up to make not only a jacket, but a pair of trousers. Now he had warm clothing for winter. He was the lucky one - always having clothes.

It was about this time Dad built us another house a short distance from where we were now living.

(Margaret continues --)

DANCING DAZE

This was a huge log house with quite a few rooms. The front room was very large - almost as big as a dance hall. It had a birch floor, perfect for dancing - and dance we did on it, too! It was the custom in those days for people to hold dances in their own homes, providing they had a room large enough for it. Since we had so much room, Dad used to put on parties frequently. Heavens, these dances used to last three days sometimes. Of course, as well as good music, there was food and refreshments. Poor Mom - how she put up with it, I will never know!

People came for miles to these affairs. From Watino (23 miles), from Eaglesham, (about 12 miles) and from Spirit River (about 23 miles, also). To say they came that far in those days when there were no roads, shows just how popular those affairs were.

The music was provided by our neighbors, namely Louie and Pete Tansem and Mr. Ramsfield and his sons.

(Now Irene takes over once more--)

In 1926 we moved to Grizzly Bear, (Belloy now) because of the school. We couldn't get a school where we lived as there weren't enough children to warrant one. Dad purchased land at Belloy, where the kids went to Steele School.

In July of 1927 our mother passed away, leaving seven children, the youngest only a year and a half. It was pretty tough sledding. I had to stay home and look after the family. Dennis Bush owns the place that Dad had bought from a Mr. and Mrs. Pollen.

(Margaret continues --)

I can't remember the names of my first two teachers, though I remember one of them was a fiery-tempered red head! But my third teacher, Doris Reed was here last summer for the Homecoming. It was so wonderful visiting with her - what memories it brought back!

The Steele School was destroyed by fire and before it was rebuilt we went to school in a house owned by a Mr. Johnson. This meant that we had to walk three miles to school. In summer it wasn't too bad, but in the winter it was awful! The weather was terribly cold those days and of course we were not adequately dressed. How very cold we used to get! Later the Steele School was built on its original site, but it was later moved to the hamlet of Belloy, where it still sits, a mute reminder of the good old days!

Dad bought the Johnson farm and later sold it to Harry Scott. Harry and Nellie Scott lived in the house that Dad built there, up until a few years ago. Alan and Joan Scott live on the place now, in a new house.

BOX AND PIE SOCIALS

Although times were hard, and believe it, they were, we did have good times, too. Among the fun things were the pie, or box socials. They were part of almost every dance you went to. Each woman attending would bring an extra boxed lunch or pie, whichever the planners decided on. At midnight someone would auction off each article. The gentlemen, of course, did the bidding. The highest bidder would win the pie or box, and would also get to eat with the donor. Only the owner was supposed to know who the article belonged to, but if you were married or had a boyfriend, a few hints were usually dropped. Many a budding romance was ruined by a fellow who let someone else outbid him! It was fun for the girls, but when the money was scarce and a fellow might have to bid ten dollars or more to keep his lady friend happy, it wasn't quite that much fun! Maybe that's why they are no longer held.

Then there was the Belloy Sports Day held on July 1st of every year. How we used to look forward to that day! It was the highlight of the year. Since roads were almost non-existent, you had to get there the best way you could. Some came by team, others on horseback, and many by 'Shanks Mare.' But no matter how you arrived, come hell or high water -- you got there!

(Irene continues ...)

In 1929 I married Carl Hansen. Carl came from Denmark and worked for Ole Tansem on the farm. We met at a dance, of course. After we were married, we moved to Tangent, where Carl obtained work on the railroad. We moved a lot while he worked at that job. From Tangent to Fort McMurray, then to Silverwood from Watino, and on and on. By this time we had a growing family and I'd had enough of moving. So in 1942, we moved back to Belloy and purchased one of Dad's farms. Later we sold out to the Soldiers Settlement Board and bought the George Gilmore place, where I still live with my son, Leonard. Carl died in September, 1976. We raised five sons - Leonard of Belloy, Eric of Grande

Prairie, Ken of West Vale, and Marvin and Donnie of Wembley, and one daughter, Shirley, living in Calgary. There are seven grandchildren.

(Margaret concludes.)

In 1933, I married a grain buyer from Belloy - Jack Culshaw. We have three children - Fay who still lives in the district, and two sons, James and Doug.

In 1964 Jack died, and twelve years later I married Bill Wortman. We make our home near Grovedale.

FIMRITE, AL AND HELEN

by Helen Fimrite

A.O. Fimrite was born near Kingman, Alberta and moved to the Valhalla Centre district in 1916 when he was three years old. He farmed at Valhalla Centre, managed the Co-op Store there and was manager-secretary of the Valhalla Creamery. In 1944 he sold his farm to his brother, Martin, and moved to Hythe, Alberta where he managed the Harold Toeten Store. In October of 1946 he bought the General Store at Wanham owned by Alex and Vera Sandercock.



Al Fimrite was a local merchant from 1946 to 1964. He also served as MLA from 1952 to 1971. He was the first Deputy Chairman and later Chairman of the Northern Development Council.

BACHELOR CLUB

When Al first came to Wanham, he and three others (Johnny Hall, Jim Rutherford and Ben Hauser) formed a Bachelor Club. Almost every week they had a big Sunday breakfast in Al's apartment under the store. The first one to get married had to pay a fine of \$100. Of course A.O. had to pay.



The Fimrite Family. Left to Right: Helen, Penny, Earle and Al.

ADDITION TO THE STORE

Al first enlarged the store premises in 1947. During the building of this addition we clerks (Susan Watson (Mills), Martin Chilton, Betty Bozarth and myself) had to jump over lumber and sawdust to wait on customers.

In 1948, Al married the former Helen Farewell who assisted him in the management of the store. Later the premises were again enlarged and the facilities modernized with the first Recording Accounts Cash Register in Wanham.

SHOPLIFTING

One shoplifting event I remember involved a young boy (not all were kids) who thought the candy counter too tempting. Gloria (Johnson) Feniak, being very quick and sharp-eyed, ran after him and brought the young lad back with the goods still in hand and pocket. She took him up to the office and said, "Here he is Mr. Fimrite. What are you going to do with him?"

"I should report to the police," Al replied. "But instead I will make out a confession for him to sign. I will keep it in the safe and if it ever happens again, I will report to the police."

The boy signed the confession and, needless to say, he didn't come around the store much after that.

FESTIVE BACHELOR PARTIES

Beginning in 1952, Al and I hosted a Bachelor Party during the Christmas season for several years. We got the idea from Al's sister who held similar parties in Valhalla Centre for several years. Those attending our first party on Jan. 1, 1952, were Harry Moss, A.E. Cox, Charles Gummarson, John Hendricks, Lester Olsen, Louis Tansum and Hans Mortensen. They were a jolly bunch and played Whist and Norwegian Whist.

During the years Al was in Wanham he also bought and sold pulpwood. He was Chairman of the Wanham Board of Trade for a time, and Chairman of the Board of Deacons of Knox Presbyterian Church for a period of

time. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge, Spirit River. His hobbies are gardening, fishing and photography.

The Fimrites had two children, Penny and Earle. their first neighbors at Wanham were Clarence Webbers, Gus Dofhers, Harry Moss and Norman Ormiston.

AL GOES INTO POLITICS

In 1952 Al was approached to run for Social Credit Candidate for the Spirit River Constituency. At the time he was Chairman of the local Board of Trade, and a member of the Ass'n of Chambers of Commerce. He had attended a convention in Montreal in Dec., 1948, of the Ass'n of Chambers of Commerce. This is how Al remembers the event:

"One day while going home to lunch, a group stopped me and asked if I would consider letting my name stand for nomination at the upcoming Social Credit Convention, as they were pleased with my work as Chairman of the Board of Trade. I didn't think I had much chance but agreed, mainly to create some interest at the Convention. I won with only five votes to spare and became the Official Social Credit Candidate for the ensuing election. I went on to win the election and was an M.L.A. for 19 years."

"During the years I was a member," Al continues, "the Alberta Government had an annual Member's party. I was delegated once or twice to draft a skit, depicting some current event. One that proved to be popular and successful was a play about the notorious 'Rivard Affair', a scandal in the Federal House of Commons involving some M.P.'s. It was the national news of the day and the skit turned out to be a delightful, humorous affair, with the cast being made up of M.L.A.'s. Another play was cast of M.L.A.'s dressed as



Fimrite Store Opening - first expansion.

another section of book.)

The Fimrites sold their store to Bill and Kitty Lewis of Belloy in Jan., 1964. In 1969 they moved to Edmonton, and in 1971 sold their home to Mrs. Ella Schenk (now Mrs. Harold Peddy). In October 1972 they moved to Calgary where Al was employed for three years in the Men's Wear Dept. of Johnstone Walker, the last year as Manager of the dept. In Nov. of 1975 they moved to Creston, B.C. where they now reside.

Penny was married to John Ible of Edmonton in 1973 and they have one son, Cameron, born in Dec., 1976. They live in Edmonton at the present time.

Earle married Dalyce Ball in 1975 in Calgary where they presently reside. They have no children.

A.O. FIMRITE, M.L.A.

A.O. Fimrite was approached in the spring of 1952 by a group asking him to allow his name to stand as a candidate for the Social Credit party. The convention was held at Spirit River and, much to his surprise, Al was the winner. In August, 1952, he was elected to the provincial Legislature as the member for the Spirit River Constituency. When first elected he thought it would be a four year term but it lengthened out to nineteen years. He thinks it was his work as Chairman of the Wanham Board of Trade, fighting for roads and bridges, which resulted in his election. In fact, when he was first elected there were few passable roads, and ferries on both the Smoky River at Watino and the Peace River at Dunvegan. There wasn't a foot of hardtop in the constituency. The fact that he was successful in accomplishing some of these projects identified him with Northern Development. Early in his legislative service he was appointed Chairman of the Private Bills Committee, which he held until appointed to Cabinet.

The first highlight of his legislative career was the official opening of the Smoky River bridge at Watino, followed by the official opening of the Dunvegan Bridge over the Peace River. The hardsurfacing of Highway 2 south from Dunvegan to Grande Prairie was followed by



Outside Fimrite's Store - 1963.

Hawaiian Hula Girls dancing and singing Hawaiian songs. This play also proved to be so funny and colorful the camera flash bulbs burst into action."

Al served as M.L.A. for the Spirit River Constituency continuously for 19 years, the last five as Minister Without Portfolio in charge of Northern Development.

(More about A.O. Fimrite's years as M.L.A. in

the hardsurfacing of Highway 49, Spirit River, Wanham, Eaglesham and Watino. At last the people of the constituency were getting out of the mud, as rapid development followed throughout the area. The program of construction of gravelled district roads was possibly the most beneficial to all of the people. This was a program that continued during his length in office. Of special importance to the Wanham District was the plight of the Veterans of the Lassiter Project. Cancellation of seed debt and a plan for long term purchase of the land was announced by Fimrite in 1954. This was the turning point in the development of what is today a good farming district and an asset to Wanham.

Another highlight in his career was the opportunity to represent the Province of Alberta, along with the Honorable E.C. Manning, at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953, also to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Dinner at Westminster Hall at which the Queen and Winston Churchill were both present. Al still has the Winston Churchill cigar presented to each member in attendance. The real keepsake was the Coronation Medal presented by Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth.

As a result of Al's continued representation for Northern Development, a Royal Commission was set up to study the area north of the 55th parallel. This resulted in the establishment of a Northern Alberta Development Council of which he was first Deputy Chairman, later Chairman and later, Minister of Northern Development. The development program was a broad one, with additional money budgeted for Northern Development. This was, in fact, a catching-up program with the rest of the province, as the facts were established that Northern Alberta had not received their fair share of Provincial revenue. The Royal Commission focused attention on the rich resources of Northern Alberta; in fact it was the blueprint for development for many years, resulting in a program of district highways, air strips, community pastures and many other items too numerous to mention. The development of the Tar Sands at Ft. McMurry, the construction of the Alberta Resources Railway from Grande Prairie to Obed, connecting to C.N.R., the building of the Proctor and Gamble Pulp Mill at Grande Prairie and an assistance program to agriculture were all important parts of Northern Development.

Programs that were of direct benefit to people of the constituency were always uppermost in Al's mind. For example: the construction of the Senior Citizens Lodge at Spirit River, the replacement of the old Spirit River Hospital, the Nurse's Residence at Spirit River, the large, modern High School at Spirit River, changing the Fairview Agricultural School to an Agricultural College, restoration of the Dunvegan Historical Site, Kadot Lake Park, and the planting of trout in many small lakes in the constituency.

In looking back at his years of service as an M.L.A., Al feels that the big break in achieving many of the things he had been working for, was in 1966 when he was elevated to the Executive Council as a Minister Without Portfolio in charge of Northern Development. He says that it is a big advantage to sit around the table as a member of Cabinet where programs are developed,

decisions are made, and most of the budgetary spendings are determined. Further, in looking back, he has no regrets today. He was elected by good majorities in five elections and in the sixth suffered defeat. He is convinced that a period of nineteen years is sufficient for any one service, and he enjoyed every minute of it!

FORTIER, ALFRED

I, Alfred Fortier, was born in Hosmer, B.C. in 1910. We moved to Calgary in 1914. Dad went to the Peace River Country and squatted on some land. He joined the army and went overseas. When he returned, he bought some stock and we left Calgary for Grizzly Bear.

It took us about three weeks to get there. The train was off the tracks a lot of the time. Dad, Ad, and myself went in the box car with the stock and Mother and the girls rode in the passenger train.



The A.L. Fortier house on the homestead built in 1924.

OLD MAN SMITH

At Grizzly Bear, old man Smith had a general store and post-office in a building that was boarded up about four feet with canvas for a roof. The telephone was by the tracks on a pole.

We arrived there in the middle of the night and slept on the floor in the Smith's place. The next day old man Bolduc came for the mail on horseback, so he let us boys ride it while he and Dad walked.

Dad filed on the quarter he had squatted on, and took the quarter that the Steele and Johnson stopping place was on for a soldier's grant. We lived in the old stopping place until 1924, when we built the house by the road across the creek from the school.

When we first got there the country was all bush, and we had to clear it by hand.

When we first came to Grizzly Bear there was only four of us. My sister, Dell, myself, Ad and Frank. Then there was about four or five more later.

We used to have pie and box socials for the school's Christmas treats. We thought it was awful if we paid more than a dollar for a box or a pie. We used to go to Wanham to church with a team and lumber wagon, through the bush and mud-holes.

I left home in 1928 and cleared land for other people, and when winter came, I went trapping north of Rahab, (Codesa), with Oscar Ferguson. We did that for two years, then I took a homestead right by Belloy, across the road from Pierogs. It was covered with heavy Jack-pine. You would never think it now. I left it in 1936. I was married that year to Pearl Urness.



Alfred Fortier cleaning a moose in the bush.

A.L. FORTIER AND FAMILY

by Wilfred Ad Fortier

My father first came to the Grizzly Bear District (Belloy) in May 1916. He filed on the south east quarter of section 5, township 78, range 2, west of the 6th.

This quarter had previously been squatted on by Bob Steele, who with his partner, Johnston, built a cook house, storage shed, and a bunkhouse, that could accommodate about 40 men. There were also two big horse stables that could handle thirty or forty teams. This was Steele and Johnstons stopping place, as it was known, used mainly for men and teams who were freighting supplies ahead of the railroad. It started operations on August 25, 1914, and closed down April 1, 1915 when the railroad had advanced beyond Grizzly Bear.

The above quarter was my father's homestead. He also took a soldiers Preemption on the quarter directly south. (He, having joined the army at that time).

During the summer of 1916 he cleared and broke one and a half acres. He then left for overseas. In November 1918, he returned greatly incapacitated, and a year later took a Soldiers Settlement Board grant. He bought two cows, four horses, plows, binder, etc. and loaded everything in a box car in Calgary (the family was living there then), and with my brother and myself we headed north to Grizzly Bear. The Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway was quite a railroad in those days. It took three days to come from Edmonton and there were a great many stops along the way, even pumping water out of the ditch for the engines. We arrived in Grizzly Bear about midnight on July 3, 1919,

and were shunted on to a siding. I remember Mr. W.A. Smith, who ran a general store and post office there, taking my brother and me into his quarters where we bedded down for the night.

The next morning, with the aid of Dave Bolduc Sr. and Sam Rouleau Sr., the car was unloaded and we started the trek to the homestead. It was my first horseback ride. My brother and I rode two of the horses, and Dad loaded the wagon and went ahead. The road which was through bush all the way, was full of ruts and lots of mud -- also mosquitoes. We arrived at the homestead in the early afternoon, having travelled about three and a half miles. My mother and sisters, who had come from Calgary before, were there to meet us. They had been staying at Rouleaus. We built a fire outside and cooked our first meal of bacon, lambs-quarters, bread and wild strawberries for dessert.

During the next two weeks Dad renovated the cook house, and we all moved in near the end of the month. The roof was of sod, laid on hay and poles, and when it rained for any length of time it came right through, but it was warm in the winter.

As we came too late in the season to plant a garden, our diet consisted mainly of eggs, rice, rabbit, moose meat, and some vegetables the neighbors gave us. But, we were all healthy, and my brother Ted was born on January 3, 1920.

I started school in 1920 at Steele School (named after Bob Steele.) This school was across the creek from our house, so we did not have far to go. Some of the children, the Prevosts, had to walk nearly four miles to school. We put a lumber roof on our house that year which came from McCrimmons mill, a sizeable operation five miles south of Grizzly Bear.

About 1926, we moved into a large new log house built near the road, and it was in this house that most of the family grew up. Four more children were born after we arrived in Grizzly Bear: Edward, Wilma, Charlie, and Muriel.

About this time, Dad became road foreman for the government, and the meager amount of money that was allotted for road work was put on the road to Belloy. Then the township line was cut and improved to Wanham. Later the next year a road was cut and made passable south over, the hills. It is interesting to recall the old road the freighters used between Wanham and Belloy. We used the same road for some years. Most of it ran north of the township line (77 and 78) cutting across homesteads and trying to stay on high ground. Eli Barrett's place, which the road angled across, was probably the best stretch of the lot. By 1927 the roads were greatly improved, but there still was no gravel on them and they were still very much a dry weather road. Cars began to appear and I think Ross Archibald was the first permanent settler in our district who owned one. But for many years after that, horses and wagons were our main transportation, and for trips to Spirit River the train was used the most.

In 1928, the U.G.G. built a grain elevator in Belloy and Rod McNeil was the first grain buyer. The grain elevator brought a great deal of business to Belloy and in that year, also, Ross Archibald built a good sized general

store. The Northern Alberta Railways installed a water tank and dug a huge reservoir for their engine. There were a good many extra people around.

It was in the same year that fire destroyed Steele School, and a makeshift school was set up one mile south of Belloy in the Johnston house. A new school was rebuilt on the original site in 1931. This school was later moved to Belloy, where it now sits, in not too good shape.

Recreation was very limited. In the summer, the annual 1st of July sports day was often held alternately at Belloy or Wanham. Baseball was played among the districts and there was often a great deal of rivalry. Dances were a much looked for event, there being at least one a month somewhere in the district. Music for the dances was usually provided with a violin and a guitar. Pianos were too heavy to move around. Weather was not always a deterrent for young people going to dances. I was on a good many rides to Fox Creek, when a three hour trip was taken in below zero temperatures. A grain box filled with straw and blankets was pleasant with a sing song among six or seven couples.

About 1932, a group of young people got together and decided to build a recreation hall in Belloy. We cut and hauled logs, some for the walls and some to be sawed into lumber for the roof and stage. These logs were cut into lumber at S. Ouelett's mill, also some at Benny Hauser's mill. The balance of the logs were made into the walls. I think the size of the hall was about 100 x40, somewhere near that. The biggest single item of expense was the asphalt roof, and we got that and paid for it on time. All the money we got was raised by putting on plays, dances and basket socials etc. Eventually we bought a piano, bought rackets for badminton and set up a court in the hall. This hall was used for many years and was a real asset to the community; also a credit to those who participated in its building.

I would be remiss here if I did not mention those who were directly concerned in building the hall. They were: Allan Archibald, Ross Archibald, Archie Robinson, Omar Rouleau, Sam Rouleau, Emile Bolduc, Dave Bolduc, George Bolduc, Ivar Pearson, Bill Williams, E. Ouelette, S. Ouelette, F. Carpenter, C. Bankhead, E. Bodette, Bun Fortier, Ad. Fortier, Dave Fortier, George Gilmour, Ira Gilmour, H. Kent, Miller, P. Ward, Hammer, John, Clarence and Andrew Urness, John and Justin Sinkivich. The hall is long gone, but for those who helped build it and paid for it many pleasant memories remain.

Among the many teachers who taught in Steele school from 1920 to 1935 were: Dan Dyer. (He had been a World War one Royal Airforce pilot). Fred Pearson, King, Thomas, S. Smith (Mrs. W. Francis), M. Atkinson, E. Boardseth, Doris Reith, Joe Jasbec, Joe Strouch, M. Cameron (Mrs. A. Ramsfield). A teachers lot wasn't always too pleasant; sometimes janitor work to do, furnaces to stoke, no running water, and usually no transportation to and from school.

In 1936, my Dad left Belloy and lived four years in Ontario. He returned in 1940, and in 1944 moved to the coast where he passed away in 1946.

Many of their old neighbors also moved to the coast:

the Babbs, Francis, Jasbecs, and Campbells were all close by and they visited often. Besides these people, most of our family were there so they were never lonely. My mother passed away in 1952.

To those of us who made the journey to the Homecoming at Wanham in 1978 it was a very pleasant experience, meeting old friends and relatives, visiting old familiar places, and reliving the past. A great deal of credit is due to those who organized this event, which went so smoothly. Also to him who gave the beautiful weather.

HISTORY OF DAPHNE AND EDDIE FORTIER

Daphne Tansem, (daughter of Olaf Tansem) and Eddie Fortier were married in 1925 in Grande Prairie. They first lived on Eddie's homestead in the Belloy area. He had filed on it when he came to that area, after serving in the Cavalry overseas, in the first World War. Eddie was an expert horseman and took great pride in his horses.

Daphne started sewing at an early age and made their own clothes and did sewing for others as well. She became an expert seamstress, and some years later taught sewing for the Singer Sewing Machine Co., in Edmonton. Daphne became a member of the first women's club - the Wanham Progressive Club, when it was organized in 1930. She was a good worker for the club and was a happy cheerful person with a great sense of humor. Daphne cheered up many who were ill or less fortunate, during the hard times.

Eddie was very good at step dancing and provided great entertainment at the local dances. He was a good carpenter and helped build many of the business places and homes in and around the Wanham District.

Both Daphne and Eddie took part in any community project and helped any neighbors during illness or accidents.

Daphne and Eddie had three daughters, Monica, Lorraine, and Shirley Anne. Their first daughter Monica was born on the homestead in August 1926. Later they bought the Lawrence Leriger land in Wanham, and their



Daphne and Eddie Fortier.

second daughter, Lorraine, was born there in December, 1930.

Monica was a tiny little girl and when she started school her grandfather, who was delivering milk in the town of Wanham, would pick her up and bring her back home. He thought she was too small to walk that far.

They were greatly missed when they moved to Peace River in the fall of 1933. Shirley Anne was born there on May 4th, 1935.

Eddie went to Yellowknife in 1938, where he worked in the Negus Mines.

Both Daphne and Eddie passed away in Edmonton - Daphne in 1969 and Eddie in 1974.



*Daphne, Monica,
Shirley Ann and
Lorraine Fortier.*

FORTIER - KURTZ

Monica Fortier was born to Daphne and Ed Fortier on their homestead in the Belloy area on August 16th, 1926. Shortly afterwards they moved to the Leriger home in Wanham. Monica stayed over at the Prevost's (neighbors) when her sister Lorraine was born on December 28th, 1930. She had been given a rather large doll, as a gift, and when she was taken home to see her new baby sister, she proudly informed her Mother and Dad that her "baby" was bigger than theirs.

Monica took her grade one in the little one room school house, where Mr. McTavish was the school teacher. Lorraine and Barbara (Johnson), walked her to school quite often, where she met and became friends with Norma McDonald.

The family moved to Peace River in the fall of 1933.

Monica later moved to Regina, Saskatchewan, where she met and married John Kurtz, on April 24th, 1954. They have one son, James Kurtz, born on February 4th, 1956.

FORTIER - GRAHAM

Lorraine Fortier was born to Daphne and Ed Fortier in Wanham, December 28th, 1930. She has one older sister, Monica, and a younger sister, Shirley Anne. Lorraine was only three years old when the family moved to the town of Peace River. She enjoyed coming back to visit relatives during the summer vacations and would ride around on the tractor with her uncle. Lorraine has a wonderful sense of humor and is always ready to help anyone that is ill or suffering from some misfortune.

Lorraine was nursing in Moose Jaw, when she met Jack Graham. They were married in Regina, July 19th, 1956. Lorraine and Jack have four children (three of their own and one adopted) - Robert, September 1957; Keith, May 1960; Linda, August 1963; and Catherine, July, 1970. They lived in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, where her husband, Jack, has a drug store.

FORTIER - ZORA

Shirley Anne Fortier was born to Daphne and Ed Fortier in the town of Peace River on May 4th, 1935. She has two older sisters, Monica and Lorraine, that had both lived in Wanham.

Shirley Anne enjoyed coming back for visits with Grandpa Olaf Tansem, Aunt Laura and Uncle Hjalmer Tansem, and Aunt Molly and Uncle Cliff Tansem. The train rides from Peace River to McLennan then on to Wanham, were always very exciting, even if she was watched every second by two older sisters. The big treat came when the train man would go through selling oranges and apples.

Shirley Anne moved with the family to Regina, where she met and married Lorne Zora on October 5th, 1960. They have two children (one of their own and one adopted), Dana, August 1963; and Shawn, February 1966. They live in St. Albert, Alberta.



Shirley Ann, Lorraine and Monica.

FRED FOWLERS

by Dorothy Fowler

Fred and Annie Fowler left the dried-out Prairie and moved from Coronation to Kleskun Lake in 1932. Things were not too good there either, so they moved to Wanham and rented Jack Lampert's farm in 1936. Here they farmed for four years. They then took land on the highway, two miles west of Belloy corner. They farmed there for three years, had an auction sale and retired to Vancouver, where they both passed away.

They saw a considerable amount of the country, having started from St. Johnsville, New York, in about the year 1917. Two years of this was spent travelling by covered wagons from Arkansas to the Canadian border. How many of us, now, would spend that much time on the road? They went by train to Edmonton. From there they farmed near Coronation. Their family is now scattered all the way from New York to Chetwynd, B.C., with one of them in Vancouver.

LEAL FOWLERS

by Dorothy Fowler

Leal came to the Peace country in the fall of 1936. I came the next spring and we were married in the Knox Presbyterian Church, in Wanham, on May 14, 1937. Vera Laughy and Guy Norton were our witnesses. Reverend Hutchinson performed the ceremony. Mrs. Ledingham and Miss Grigor were here then.

In the fall, we rented the Harry Jones farm and lived there for three years till it was sold. In the fall of 1940, we bought a quarter of land owned by Mrs. Hamlin, who was formerly Mrs. Duncan Cameron. There was a nice, big, log house on this place, with a brick fireplace and a hard-wood floor in the living room. We were very comfortable there. Four of our five children were born while we lived there during the next eighteen years. I don't know if we were just lucky or the Lord was with us, but during that time our family had no serious illness or accidents.

We had the same problems as most people in this area - water. There was a shallow dam which either went dry or the water got so hard we could hardly use it to wash. I used to put lye in it and leave it for a while, then skim the top off. In the summer we hauled drinking water and in the winter melted snow. We did find a spring on the quarter west of us. After fixing it up, we had good drinking water until one day Leal went for water and a bear was having a bath in it. He had managed to get the top off.

TOUGH CLEMATIS

Another thing I recall is that our neighbor, Mr. Hendersen, gave me a root off his Japanese Clematis. It got so that it almost covered the south side of the house. One winter we kept Mrs. Bramlett's sheep and goats while she went back to the States for the winter. One sunny day the goats got in the yard and ate the Clematis right to the ground. Several years later, when it had a

good start again, our pigs got out and ate it off at the ground again. When we left the farm the vine was growing again, beautifully.

When the children were all small, my dad wanted us to come home to Hanna for Xmas. There were too many animals to be looked after so Leal stayed home. While we were there, we all went to a show. When we started for home, six year old Neil was missing. We did everything but call the police and decided to take the other children home. Here sat Neil on the porch waiting for us. He had been looking at something and lost us but managed to find my dad's house.



Dorothea and Leal's Wedding Day - 1937.

LEAL FOWLERS

Leal came to the Peace Country, in the fall of '36. His dad was then farming Jack Lampert's farm - the former Murray place. I came up in the spring of '37 and we were married in the Knox Presbyterian Church, by Rev. Hutchinson. We rented a farm from Harry Jones. Two years later the farm was sold to the Dragometz's, so we



Dorothea with Beverly and Neil - 1941.

bought a quarter section a mile south of the school, from Mrs. Hamelin. Here we lived for 18 years. Times were very hard and there was little land broken on the farm. Leal had to work out to keep things going. We were always thankful that the family was so healthy and had no accidents. The only near tragedy was when a horse kicked at me and bit me in the side. After nineteen days in the hospital, and a penicillin shot every three hours, I was good as new. Our four older children received their grade twelve education at the Wanham School.

In the fall of 1957 we moved into Wanham and started a butcher shop, which we ran for 17 years. While here we saw another daughter, Janice, through high school.

This spring we sold out to our boys, that is the farm, livestock and equipment. We are now hoping our good health will continue so we can do the things we have always wanted to do. We have four of our children married and living in the Peace Country. Beverly lives on Vancouver Island. We have twelve grandchildren around us, whom we adore.

Last year we started out with our truck and trailer and drove across Canada. We visited all of Leal's brothers, aunts, and uncles, etc., who are still in the States.



Back Row, Left to Right: Beverly, Ted, Patricia. Front Row: Neil.

THE FRANCIS FAMILY

- as told by their children Helen, Elizabeth, and Hillas. Some of the dates might not be quite accurate, but to the best of our knowledge this is an account of the early days in Grizzly Bear (later named Belloy) and of our early childhood.

Our father Walter, and his brother Sidney Francis, left Edmonton in November of 1914 with the idea of homesteading in the Peace River country. They took the train to the end of the steel (Northern Alberta Railway) to a place called Saw Ridge, now called Slave Lake, where they waited until the lake froze over. Indians took them over by sleigh, along the Lesser Slave Lake to Grouard and then to the Little Smoky River, where they waited for the river to freeze. Teams of horses hauled their supplies along the railroad line as the N.A.R. wasn't in this far.



Walter Francis - 1923.

Land hadn't been surveyed as yet, so time was spent cutting section lines for farming. Later they picked out their farms at Grizzly Bear, Father's two quarters being S.W. 1/4 Section 33, Township 77, Range 2 West of 6th Meridian and N.W. 1/4 Section 28, Township 77, Range 2, West of 6th Meridian.

Father then left for the War. He enlisted in January 1916 in the 138th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Forces, and served in the artillery overseas, receiving his discharge on April 5, 1919. He and his brother Sid both returned from overseas. This time the train took them as far as McLennan. By this time the Fortiers' had also settled in the area. A sister (Milly) had also arrived from England and she later married Herbert Elliot. He too homesteaded in the area nearby. For the first few years the two brothers and sister lived in a log shack with a sod roof.

In the meantime our mother, Susan Smith, had arrived. She came from Ireland and taught school several years in Alberta (Milk River in Southern Alberta, and Clover Bar, near Edmonton), then decided to venture to the Peace River area. The name Grizzly Bear appealed to her (a delightful story to tell her Irish relatives.) She arrived to teach at Steele School in 1922, where she stayed for one year, teaching several of the Fortier family, a good many of the Prevost family, as well as some of the Bolduc's and Rouleau's. In 1923 she taught for the year at Silver Wood, near Rycroft and then decided to return to Ireland for a year before she married our father, in 1925. The year mother was in Ireland, Dad got busy and built a log house - unique in that it was L shaped and was to have a fireplace, one of the first in the area! Our Uncle Herbert Elliot helped with the logs and erecting the structure, and Bill Trumpower from Wanham laid the fireplace. Louis Paul built a cupboard for the kitchen.

Susan and Walter Francis had three children: Helen, Elizabeth, and Hillas, who all attended Steele School. Teachers they had were Joe Jasbec, Joe Strauss, Henrietta Miller, Mary Kostash and Montelene Cameron to name a few. The nearest high school was in Wanham at South Slope, five and a half miles away. Helen's first



Mrs. Francis who arrived to teach in 1922.

teacher in high school was Laura Lipinski (Steele). At first Helen went by bike (gumbo roads weren't the best for bike riding), so occasionally she walked or stayed over night at George MacDonald's family home when winter conditions were severe. The second year Elizabeth was ready for Wanham too, so our parents rented a small one room shack for us on the Cameron property and we batched during the week. By the third year Steele School had closed, so Hillas came to the Wanham Elementary School and stayed the nights on the Cameron property (Mrs. Pickard was living in it at the time) and ate his meals with his sisters.

Helen completed her schooling at South Slope in 1944 and worked the summer months at Scott's Store in Belloy, then went on to Edmonton to take a business course. Elizabeth worked for a time in Grande Prairie Hospital, and Hillas helped on the family farm. In the winter of 1944/45 our father took sick with pneumonia. It was one of those real prairie winters, too. The district nurse, Mrs. Manson, had great difficulty getting to see Dad, but with the assistance of good neighbors (Fred Lewis, George MacDonald and Halvor Sveinungaard) help was obtained. No car was available in those days and twelve year old Hillas had a big responsibility hitching up a team and driving his father the three and a half miles to Belloy, where he was put in a baggage car and sent to the Spirit River Hospital. He remained for the next three months. During the remainder of the winter, Hillas and Mum ran the family farm, which included pigs and cattle, so chores were numerous.

In the fall of 1945, Father and Mother decided to leave because of health reasons, and moved to B.C. The farm was purchased by Halvor Sveinungaard. Our parents obviously still had the true pioneer farming spirit and returned to the area in the fall of 1950, purchasing the same farm. In the five intervening years our house had been used as a granary. The house was put on a foundation. Hillas built new kitchen cupboards, as he was now working in Salmon Arm. The house was electrified and a phone line installed by the local farmers, who all

worked together. Father and Mother spent another very happy six years on the farm before retiring to White Rock and Summerland, B.C.

Summer activities included many sports days and ball games at the ball field opposite Steele School. Berry picking in the Birch Hills was a family picnic, as well as much needed fruit for winter.

MUMPS

Special outings were spent with the MacDonald children in the early 30's. Once we arrived for a Christmas dinner by sleigh. The District nurse at the time was Dr. Johnston and she was present too. On our arrival she decided Hillas had mumps, so we were quickly bundled up and returned home to be put in quarentine for the next three weeks! We had skating parties on the dam. Hillas made skis and nearly drove the family wild by having to bend the tips of his skis in the hot water reservoir on the stove.



Francis home - 1925.

HORSE WHISKERS

A big event in our lives was the arrival of our mother's sister from Ireland, the Christmas of 1939. Aunty Ev (Jane Smith) was the worldly traveler who had been to France and to Australia before visiting Canada. The three of us were pop-eyed with this wonderful visitor who arrived with numerous trunks of clothes and treasures. Mother was so thrilled and excited at the first member of her family to visit that she forgot to put the chicken in the oven when we went to meet the train. Instead her first meal was boiled eggs! Aunty Ev was disappointed we hadn't met her by horse and sleigh (we were gloating over our first car!) She wanted to know why the horses had white whiskers in Canada? Everything was covered with hoar frost!

Family friends and gatherings were held at the Fortier home. Their daughter Delima had married our Uncle Sid who lived on the next farm. She had been married previously to Dave Bolduc and he died leaving her with three young girls. We alternated our Christmas and New Year's parties between the three houses. The Sveinungaard family were exceptional neighbors. The

Olson family, the Wiegels and Bankheads were all neighbors we visited, as well as the Babb family, the Aley's and Gilmours - all in the Belloy District. We had occasional visits to Norman MacDonalds' in Heart Valley. The George MacDonald family in Wanham were special friends, plus the Harringtons and Hausers.



Dave and Eva Funk's first home in West Vale.

MR. AND MRS. ALBERT FUNK AND FAMILY

My dad, Dave Funk, and Joe Hauser left Saskatchewan in the late fall of 1927. They went by rail to Grande Prairie, Alberta. They had heard of the great Peace River country where the land was good and there were lots of homesteads to be had.

Arriving in Grand Prairie, they headed for the Land Office and met Tom Newton, the Homestead Inspector. He told them to go to Wanham and then go ten to fourteen miles south to find their homesteads.

The train arrived in Wanham at midnight, so they stayed in the station. It was minus forty degrees fahrenheit. The station was much like a box car with a coal heater in the middle. Next morning they hitched a ride south with Fred Reiswig, who was hauling grain. The snow was deep and they walked most of the way to keep warm. They spent the night at Reiswigs. They filed on their homesteads and returned to Saskatchewan. There Dad spoke highly of the great Peace River Country and of the future it held.

Mr. William Parlee heard Dad was back, and in February, 1928 Mr. Parlee asked Dad to go with him to the Peace River country. Arriving in February there was a chinook - snow gone, creeks running and even a few blades of grass showing through. These Saskatchewan people were not used to this type of weather and thought that it was really 'God's Country'. However, when Dad had seen his homestead covered with a blanket of snow he had thought it quite open. Now - he saw timber laying in all directions. Its a wonder that half of the Neudorf district did not move to the Peace River area -- Dad boasted so much about it.

STOW-AWAYS

In March we loaded a box car with horse implements, household effects, six horses, one colt, two cows, some chickens, and two stow-aways -- Albert and Jack. The box car was billed as settlers effects. Dad, Jack and I rode in the car. Jack and I slept in the democrat way in the back, surrounded with boxes and hay and only a small access tunnel to crawl through. "When I see one of the train crew coming I'll yell, 'Dick' ", said Dad. One of the horses - a real bronco - was named Dick. He snorted at everything, so it worked out O.K.

We arrived in Wanham in April 1928. Dad rented a two room cabin with a barn on thirty acres, from Art Campbell, near Wanham. Then Dad wrote for Mother, Grandmother, Mabel and Jim to come. They arrived in April. Jack, Jim and Mabel went to school in Wanham. As soon as we got a bit of crop in at Campbells, Dad, Mr. Hauser and I headed out to the homestead. We had a low steel wheel wagon but found it would not clear the stumps in the muddy road. Dad bought an old high wheeled wagon. Crews were working on the road through the hills at that time.



Albert and Jennie Funk's first home.

When we arrived at Marius Olsen's, Dad asked him if we could cross his land. Mr. Olsen even helped us clear the trail, which went in a snaky direction across the Olsen and Nicholson land. The road was used for some time. Mr Hauser said the land was too far from town, and he threw up his homestead, and I filed on it.

Our next trip was to George Reiswig's sawmill for slabs. With slabs and tar paper we made a liveable shack to stay in. That summer we built a large barn and a two story frame house and moved Mom and family out in the fall.

Dad was quite an organizer. Soon he was busy trying to get a school. There was quite a hassle as to where it should be built as some wanted it here and some wanted it there. Finally the name chosen was West Vale School. Everyone pulled together working to build the school for the good of all. It was free labor. Logs cut and hauled, all work volunteered. Mr. McDougal was the only paid carpenter.



Albert, Jennie and baby, Karen.

The first teacher was Miss Hawkinson, who became Mrs. Art Johnston; then Miss Sylvia Hamilton, who became Mrs. George Tracy; Elaine Sellers who became Mrs. Kitney, (Mr. Kitney was a United Church minister in Wanham); Miss Ethel Burns and Miss Henrietta Miller were the only girls to escape West Vale marriages. Miss Esther Anderson was a relief teacher for only two months. The Don Juans of the district were in hot pursuit, but I think someone else had already staked his claim elsewhere. Bill Tomaski was the only male teacher. I do not know how that happened as it seemed the School Board preferred the ladies; (there were lots of bachelors in those days.) Miss Jennie Cahill became my wife - Mrs. Albert Funk; and then my sister Mabel, became Mrs. Ed Tracy. She had been a student there, but also taught at the West Vale School.

GOOD COFFEE

The school served many purposes; church services, political meetings, card parties and concerts. There was something going on every weekend. The ladies brought lunch and there was a large copper boiler of coffee on the big drum heater. I remember one night, there was a larger crowd than usual. When entertainment was over, Mr. Jack Hendricks could not find his cap. On cleaning up I threw out the coffee grounds and there was the cap. I remember that there had been many complaints that night about terrible coffee. I've kept that secret for nearly fifty years.

Those were depression days, but looking back they were happy days. Everyone had time to visit, to invite you in for a meal regardless of what they had to eat. Everyone was welcome in our home. The door was open to all. Even transients were given food and a place to sleep.

One exciting event was when brother Fred was born on May 20, 1929. I drove to Wanham (14 miles) with a team

and buggy for the district nurse, Mrs. Cole. She had left a note stating that she was in Peoria. When I arrived there she had left on another call, so away I went after her. Luckily I ran into Lawrence Toftner. He had a Model-A Ford and he told me he could catch up with her and bring her to our place. I was glad, as the team was pretty well played out. When Mrs. Cole arrived, baby Fred had been born. Someone brought Mrs. Noble Johnston who helped Mom. Mrs. Cole checked everything out and Mr. Toftner then took her back to Wanham.

Money was hard to come by but I did a bit of trapping weasels, squirrels and a few coyotes. We got our share of deer and moose too. In those days you shared with your neighbors. If I remember correctly, it was the Nagel boys who started that.

In the summer for recreation we had a baseball team. The league included teams from Wanham, Belloy, Peoria and West Vale. The Community Hall was started. George Rieswig and Emil Sather were the big organizers of it. I was secretary for a couple of years.

During the early thirties, the Saskatchewan and Southern Alberta crop report was poor - no rain. The Good Lord must have been with us homesteaders. The rains came at the right time, but I cannot say the same about the frost and snow. There were many good crop yields. I had oats go 120 bushels to the acre - only the price was poor. We broke land with six horses and averaged about an acre a day.

(Albert has decided that I, Jennie, should have my say)

I arrived by train in Wanham the end of August 1937 to teach school at West Vale. I was met by Dave Funk. We drove into Wanham (I was surprised to be met by someone with a car) and the first person I met was the late Gordon McDonald, a grade 11 student at Wanham. Half way to West Vale, I met my 'knight in shining armour'. However, he was not on a snow white charger - but on a wagon, serenaded by a full load of pigs! On arrival at the Funk farm, I met Mrs. Funk, Gran, Jim and Freddie. Jack was away threshing but came home a day or two later. Mabel came over with her husband, Ed Tracy. We discovered that we had gone to the Calgary Normal School together and were standing side by side when the group picture was taken for the H.M.S. Pinafore.

The school was the regular one room country school, similar to the one I had attended for eight or nine years near Calgary. The children were all nice, but I must confess that I had an extra soft spot for the Grade Ones - Mary Hryciuk and Billie Metheny. However my teaching career was short lived -- four months. On December 18, I broke my leg while skiing with Freddie Funk.

On January 30, 1938, Albert and I were married by Rev. Robert Parlee. The Mumby girls sang and it was very enjoyable. The large front room of the Funk's was full; Tracys, Parlees, Wellmans, Hausers, Mumbys and my mother, Mrs. Parish. Karen was born Nov. 19 1938 and Tom, January 21, 1941, while we lived on Albert's homestead in West Vale.

When Tom was nine months old, George Olsen rode over to our place one morning, wanting Albert to take his car and go after the nurse. Glen was about to make his entrance, a few days early. The roads were terrible, as it

was such a wet fall. It was decided to get Albert's dad to go with his fast team for the nurse. I told George I'd heard that Grandma Parlee had acted as a mid-wife many times, so he sent Mr. Chapin after her. I went mudding my way on foot to see if I could help. When Glen arrived I was with Bertha. I had no idea what to do, but when Grandma Parlee arrived she took over. She told me to watch so I'd know what to do if I were ever in a like situation. She was wonderful, and all's well that ends well.

Money was scarce and I remember one neighbor saying no matter how she tried she could not keep her grocery bill under ten dollars a month!

COLLARS FOR EARRINGS

Albert needed money to buy a much needed horse collar. One day Albert said to me, "Here comes Barber". He was a trader and homesteader from across the Bad Heart, who had a wagon full of used goodies. He had the horse collar Albert needed to fit old Tom, but Albert had nothing to catch his eye. He brought him into the house to see if I had anything to make a deal. I showed him several tea cloths, etc., but he was not interested. I went into the bedroom and picked up a pair of earrings. When he saw them his eyes sparkled and he could hardly wait to get his hands on them. He told Albert that he could make the trade and that I could have my pick of the hats he had in a barrel on the wagon to boot. Mr. Barber was an interesting gentleman.

Albert and neighbor, Arthur Bohnke, traded quarters so we moved three miles south and became close neighbors of the Johnny Gulicks and Harry Beamers.

At this time World War II was in progress. Jack and Jim Funk joined the Airforce and were stationed in Vancouver for a time. Jack was sent to the Aleutians and Jim to Europe. (I believe he landed on D-Day, in France). Albert joined the army and was in the Provost Corp stationed in England.

Many pleasant hours were spent playing games on stormy winter days and nights in West Vale. David, Lloyd, Gordon and Mary Gulick came (usually in that order), and sometimes younger Harry Beamer. We played table-tennis, checkers, krokenole, whist, bridge and rummy. One late morning Mary Gulick came over to ask us over for the day. I had just mixed up a large batch of bread and told her I was sorry we could not visit. Within five minutes, David was in the yard with team and sleigh and said, "Ma said wrap the bread in a blanket and come. It can be baked at our place." So away we went, bread tin wrapped in an Eiderdown. Supertime at Gulicks we had fresh buns and cinnamon buns. I took the rest of my baking home about midnight.

Many happy memories were had, but some were sad and some tragic. Albert's grandmother, Caroline Schick died in 1941. She was a kind, sweet lady whom I remember loved Karen very much - her first great-grandchild. Then the tragic deaths of Lloyd, David, and later, Gordon Gulick. These boys were like family to us.

The Beamers were great readers and many good books were exchanged and discussed between us. Frankie played with Karen and Tom, and one day came down to

invite them to her birthday party - with a special invitation for Albert, as he was so much fun. He would play ball and tag with them whenever he had the time. The screaming that went on at times - you would think that someone was being murdered. I think the three of them must have had nightmares after one of his sessions!

Another big occasion was when a large parcel arrived from my Mom, Grandma Parish. It always contained old hats of Mom's and of my sister's. Karen, along with the Gulick girls (Peggy, Ella Mae and Jessie) would have a wonderful time playing house. It was the era of veils, and I remember one monstrosity was purple, with an eight inch tall cluster of grapes in the front and then a long veil - that was the favorite. If I remember correctly, Jessie usually got it.

Margaret Gulick and I had quite an experience when our old cow got her head stuck in a forty-five gallon drum. We tried to saw off a piece of the horn. There were no men around to help.

Tom broke his leg when he was just a little fellow. Johnny Gulick drove him to Grande Prairie in his truck. The roads were terrible and they nearly did not make the big Saddle Hill. David Gulick and Mr. Beamer went along to try to help make the rough ride a little less rough.

FIRE FIGHTING

In 1927 there was a green belt area three miles south of Wanham, extending from the Smoky River west and surrounding Kadot Lake. West and south of the lake there was beautiful timber.

Trix Willis was the fire ranger who tried to keep the fires in control. Men were drafted for fire fighting and got 15¢ per hour. Homesteaders were often eager to earn the money, which was hard to come by in those times.

When you were on the payroll fighting fires, you took a blanket, as you lived outdoors. Grub was packed in. Johnny Gulick packed lots in with saddle horse and pack horse. Albert Funk packed in some on his back. The food consisted of tea, coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, pork and beans, bacon, jam and bread - which was the worst to pack.

The way the fire fighting was done was with a shovel. You dug a shallow trench, cut down some trees but it was mostly a lost cause. There were no bulldozers or water bombers. In those times the rain was the only hope.

I remember one time we were fighting a fire south of Heart Valley. The fire jumped our fire guard and went to our campsite - burned out all our grub and clothes. We could not get back to save anything.

Jim Munro was in charge of our party. He carried a .22 rifle and so we ate partridge for a few meals.

There was a life lost in one of the great fires - 1942, I believe. Raphael Kline died in that one. It was a terrible fire that broke all records.

Fire did its share of damage and put fear in many old timers - but it also opened up the country. Many sure got dirty from clearing the land. Sometimes you even wondered if they were from the white race. After the fire a lot of charcoal black wood was the result.

It's nice when we go back on holidays to see all the old

neighbors. Mrs. Madge Murphy lives in Vancouver and we hear from her periodically. Edwin Wellman lives with his family in Whonnock, about twelve miles from us.

Grandma Funk is now 83 years old and although she has slowed down, she is still her sweet self and is bright as can be. Grandpa, Dave Funk, died in 1966. Grandma Funk has nineteen grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren, with two more expected soon.

About two years ago we were visiting Grandma and she insisted that we have tea. She brought six different kinds of goodies. I teased her that she did not have enough varieties, at which she brought two more kinds! She is a wonderful lady and we love her very much.

The family is pretty well located in B.C.'s lower mainland, except our oldest daughter Karen Toerper. Karen and Heinz bought our Heart Valley farm. They still farm it, but live in a lovely home in Grande Prairie. They have four children: Marion, Chris, Larry and Heidi. Our oldest son, Tom, is married and lives in Haney. He and Marg have four sons and a beautiful home; sons are Wayne, Rick, Mike, and Curt. Tom owns River Road Meats, Ltd., a successful meat packing plant. Peter, our younger son, works at Hammond Mill, is married and lives in his own home in Mission, B.C. He and Joanne soon expect a playmate for little Kenny. Our youngest, Candi, was married last April to Mike White. Mike works for brother Tom, and Candi is a teacher. They also have a home in Mission, B.C.

BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

Albert is now retired and we are in good health. Albert tells me I'm as beautiful as ever -- he can't see too well, and that my voice is like to music to his ears -- his hearing isn't very good either. We celebrated our 40th Wedding Anniversary on January 30, 1978.

MEMORIES OF PEACE RIVER LAND AND PEOPLE 1929-1932

by Carl Ganz

In October, 1929, my brother Bill and I started out for the great Peace River country. We were told that it was the country for bankrupt people to start all over again, and gain a new lease on life.

Bill had a Ford Coupe, and we started out from Medicine Hat, north to Calgary, Edmonton, stopped over night at Barrhead and arrived next evening at Smith. It was very dark and, seeing all traffic tracks going straight, we almost ended up in the River Athabasca - the ferry boat was tied up for the night on the opposite side!

In the car, we slept and woke, froze and shivered, until the next morning. Up early, via Slave Lake - High Prairie, we arrived at Wanham at noon. Coming by the schoolhouse and stopping for direction, we could not get satisfactory answers from a couple of schoolboys. We asked them to send the teacher out - we would ask her - but the boys said, "No. Why are you interested in our teacher?" and they bounded away. So we continued on the only road south and stopped at the first home-

stead's house on the way, which was Otto Nolde's - a bachelor. There we stayed a night or two, and then went on to the Peoria settlement.

The first people we got acquainted with were the Reiswigs. There was Grandpa Reiswig and George, and three other brothers - Peter, Dan, and Fred. In 1929 they were all well-established and farmed successfully, and supplied employment for all of us greenhorn-would-be-homesteaders.

Peter Reiswig had built the first long house I had ever seen, 100 feet long from gable to gable, and it was also 'open-house' for many a new comer. It was a free restaurant and motel, all in one. I can never forget that particular family as long as I live. Be it mentioned right here also, that in the meantime three of those Reiswig brothers rest in their graves, and their good deeds do follow them.

The Reiswig family came from California in 1922, and farmed on land in Clairmont, Alta. They harvested their first grain crop in 1923. In the fall of 1922, they all attended a campmeeting in Bluesky. On their return trip home they met Homestead Inspector Newton who told them about some good burned-over homestead land near Belloy and Peoria. The Reiswig brothers were interested, went spying, found the land they were looking for, and filed on several quarter-sections.

With farm machinery already in their possession they moved, in 1927, from Clairmont to Peoria. With determination, and by the sweat of their brow, they had themselves established in a short time. Another very illustrious family came from Winnipeg at this same time and homesteaded in Peoria. Their name was Ziprick. They brought along the answers to several younger bachelor's prayers - who looked for capable housewives at that time. Natalie was married to Bill Rottacher, Annie to Fred Reiswig, Lucy to Dan Reiswig, Elfreda to Isaac Seibel, Hattie to Lawrence Toftner, Margaret to John Neufeld, and Emma to Del Reiswig.

They raised children and built the first school in 1928. First teachers were Miss Nichols, Miss Cox, and Mrs. Moore. Church services were also held in the schoolhouse.

Dan Reiswig built the first Machine shop, and with his brothers, set up sawmills. As I came to Peoria in 1929, my first employment was in such a sawmill, near Wanham. My first abode was the bunkhouse. There was not enough currency in the district and lumber took its place instead. I heard very often from newcomers, "How much lumber can I get for this plow, or this cow, or for this horse?" Yes, trading was the order of the day, and it worked well. The newcomers got their houses built with lumber, and they brought in things the beginners needed to get established.

George Reiswig was the first postmaster in Peoria, an aggressive farmer, as well as cattle raiser and shrewd business man - leading on all fronts, even road construction. I've heard road foreman Fraser say, "The Reiswig's can build more roadway in a week's time, than the government can in a month." So it was, after those successful farmers had acquired tractors on tracks, that the road link from Wanham to Peoria was built, in a very short time - graded and ditched.

Between seeding time and harvest George Reiswig, Dan Reiswig, and his brother-in-law Bill Rottakcer, set up a sawmill in George's pasture. Many homesteaders hauled in logs from the surrounding bush country and took finished lumber for wages. Nobody had cash, but all had work and things to eat. Eggs were 3 cents a dozen, and flour was obtained by screwing the grinder plates tighter and running it through a second time. Then you had flour and wheat porridge. Potatoes grew plenty and wild meat on the hoof was everywhere for the successful hunter.

Captain Cook of the R.C.M.P. visited my homestead once in those poor thirties and asked, "How are you making out? Have your kiddies enough to eat?" I said, "Yes, sir! we have whole wheat flour and coarse wheat porridge, and spuds." "Is that all?" he asked. "Aren't you aware of the fact King George has all kinds of cows and bulls running around here? Get yourself what you need." I said, "Can't do that in closed season." "Get yourself what you need, but no wasting! I'll be around again." I was lucky the next windy day, to meet up with a young wild cow. We were never really undernourished those trying years. I was greatly astonished about what I heard from this Canadian Law man. I came originally from Europe and there, wild game poaching was very risky, and many starving people got shot for doing it. Yes, Canada, and particularly the good Peace River country, was for me, - "God's country."

FIRE BEARS DOWN ON THE SETTLEMENT

But right soon, in May 1931, calamity struck! I was just finishing my last day at Rottackers, making fences so his milk cow wouldn't wander off the place. He asked me to stay another day for some important help he needed. By noon I saw great clouds of smoke rising in the west and I told Bill Rottacker about it. He said, "Have lunch first, and if you think your place is in the danger zone you're welcome to go and see."

Off to Dan Reiswig I went and begged of him the use of his saddle horse, then galloped westward. After five miles distance I came up to the grass fire which was driven by a fierce wind from west to east. I forced the horse through the thick smoke and arrived in my neighbourhood, seeing some buildings on fire. One of my neighbors, Buchanan, was absent from home and his shack was burning. Another neighbor, Fred Birdsall, was fighting the sparks on his straw-covered barn. My very close neighbor, Ted Henry, had left his place with his team, and his shack was burning - the mattresses he had laid out on some fresh plowing and the seed wheat in sacks on top - all was burning in a heap there.

I looked toward my frame house and saw only a black ruin standing there, smoking embers aglow. I rushed up to it on horseback and the longer I looked into the embers the more weird things I saw - my 303 Savage rifle with bent barrel aglow, and what else? I had a good wife and little daughter at home, where were they? Yes, I imagined to see their bones aglow among the burning embers of my new house. I was not able to steady the young horse, because the ground was burning. I could smell hoof on fire, so made circles around wider and wider, yelling

names of wife and child in to the howling wind, as loud as I could, but no response!

There was Kadot Lake one-half mile away, but how could they reach it in that holocaust of a burning hell? I was high on my horse and could see quite a distance, but no living thing was to be seen, except a few half-burned porcupines not afraid of a rider. So, after yelling myself hoarse I gave up looking and searching. I went to let my friends know what had happened.

I came by Birdsall's place and gave him my story. He looked so odd and finally said, "What are you talking about? I haven't understood one single word, Carl". Here I was babbling in German to a man from the Island of Man. So terribly it affected me, I almost lost my mind. Farther east I went, toward Peoria, riding through the yard of Mr. Parlee. He stopped me and asked about my family, I said, "They are all in the ashes of my place." "Hold on," he said "you of little faith. I'm surprised, Mr. Ganz. Get off that horse in a hurry. My little boy will lead it home and tell the owner of the horse what happened. He will bring my boy back and help in searching, too. In the meantime we will gather up some more helpers and we'll go right back and and we will find your loved ones, for sure."

We went back and went over the new plowing of my closest neighbor, Ted Henry. I took the middle furrow, and the other 3 men took the left, and right, over the 17 acres of plowing, and combed over the field very carefully. Nothing in sight yet, and it was getting dusk and cool. My faith was tested to the limit; and then, God let it happen.

On the very edge of the field, on one side, there was a little brook with a trickle of water in it. There they had hidden and waited for deliverance. Like a ghost, my dear wife raised herself up as out of the ground, with the little girl hanging limp in her arms like a dead rabbit, eyes all red from the acrid smoke those many hours. They both had caught colds and had used the wetted handkerchiefs over their noses as masks, not to inhale too much smoke.

Yes, I thanked my merciful God many times afterwards that all turned out as it did. A month after this untoward experience a son was born as an addition to our family.

What now? Can a burned-out homesteader recover from such loss? Yes, with neighbors and friends of such calibre, yes! The next church collection was handed over for a new start \$12.75 - in those days great money. Next time I met George Reiswig, he shook my hand and asked, "How're you feeling now?" Something dropped out of his hand. Drawing my attention to it he said, "It's for you." A \$25.00 cheque from him, and a promise of 1,000 board feet of lumber for the new house. His partner, Bill Rottacker, also promised 500 board feet of lumber. Fred Reiswig offered us refuge in his house until we had built again.

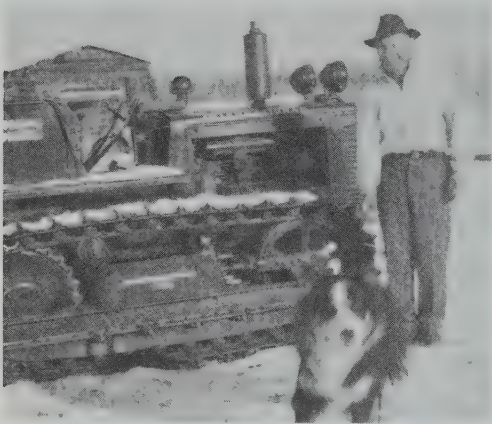
I wrote a letter to the T. Eaton Co. who, after an inquiry about my total loss and a verification by Postmaster George Reiswig, sent a freight load of the most necessary things from the substandard division of Eaton's; full sets of dishes and cutlery, bedding and blankets and some clothing.

This great devastating fire happened May 12, 1931,

started by a homesteader, Mr. Dreger, when he burned brushpiles on his homestead west of the Woking - Grand Prairie highway. A spark flew across the road and caused a burnout of a stretch of timber, 10 miles long and 6 miles wide, destroying 3 homes besides much valuable timber.

These experiences of our homestead life in the Peace River - the bad and the good - will be in our memory till life shall end. We are so glad to live again so close together with those people from the Peace River country, now in the good Okanagan.

Happy End.



*Charlie Geller by
Cliff Tansem's
T.D.6 Caterpillar.*

HISTORY OF CHARLIE GELLER

by Mollie Murphy Tansem

Charlie Geller came to Wanham late in 1918. He had been in the army in the first world war. He filed on the land south of Cornelius Olson's place. There was a good cabin on the one quarter built by Louie Ellison, who had left. Charlie was a very good natured, cheerful fellow. He was a good friend and neighbor. If any one needed a helping hand Charlie would be there to do what he could.

Fred Murphy broke 50 acres for Charlie in 1919. Charlie bought some good horses and each year got more land under cultivation. Charlie liked company. He always had the coffee pot on. He was a special friend of the Fred Murphys and Cliff and Mollie Tansem.

THAT'S SERVICE

One morning Cliff and Mollie dropped in for coffee at Charlie's. All at once they were greatly surprised when a little hen flew right in the window, landing in a rocking chair where she made herself comfortable on the cushion. Soon she laid an egg; then with much cackling, she flew back out the window. Charlie said she came in every day and laid her egg there in the rocking chair.

Charlie had done some boxing while in the army. He taught some of the young lads and men how to box one winter when there was an athletic club formed.

He spent every Christmas at the Fred Murphys from 1918 till 1940. Then their daughter Mollie and husband Cliff Tansem put on the Christmas festivities and dinner for many years. One year Charlie came all the way back from Vancouver for Christmas.

He operated a cafe in Wanham. Later he built the big poolhall.

ROAST CAT

Besides the horses, Charlie had some cattle, a dog, a couple of cats and a bunch of chickens. He made pets of all of them. One cold winter night he came home from town, closed the oven door and made a fire in the cookstove. After a while he was wondering where the cats were, then decided to open the oven door to let the heat warm the shack. He discovered his two cats in the oven-dead! He really felt bad about it. They'd crawled in there for warmth.

He sold his land later after he'd built a bigger house. He moved into a small house on Cliff and Mollie Tansem's place after he sold his land.

Charlie was a real good cook. Not one who dropped in left without coffee or a meal.

In the mid 20's Charlie and Hans Mortenson had a threshing outfit. Charlie had the tractor and Hans, the separator. They threshed for miles around.

Charlie moved to Vancouver in 1957. He was always going to come back to visit. He passed away in September, 1969. He was 79 years old. He was buried in the Soldiers Cemetery in Surrey, B.C.

THE IRA GILMOURS

The Ira Gilmours were married in Spirit River on May 14, 1926. They have four children: Daughter Onie, working in Grande Prairie and three sons Leonard, Floyd and Carl. Leonard is an electrician and lives in Winnipeg. He has one son - Lance. Floyd is in Fort Saint John. He has a son, Kenny, and a daughter, Gwen, Carl is also in Fort St. John. He is an optician and has 2 sons, Darrel and Dale.

Ira has trapped and hunted extensively throughout the years. One month alone he bagged 36 coyotes.

His wife remembers an occasion when bears had been chasing their calves so Ira had to shoot the bear. Later they found the bear had had a cub so they took it home and fed it. The cub was fed milk from the separator and it got so that every time it heard the separator start it would hold it's dish up with its paws for the milk.

Ira recalls his sister Iva being borrowed by the Wanham District so that they would have enough pupils to begin a school there.

The Steele school was built in 1922 and was made of logs and erected by volunteer labour.

Ira used to ride the seven miles to school on old "Paint", a pinto horse who had been given by one of their old friends Clyde Smith from Egg Lake.

One day someone stole the horse from where she had been tethered in the trees behind the school. The horse was never retrieved.

Later Ira's children walked 4 1/2 miles across country to the Steele school and during the winter they wore skis and snowshoes and even though blizzards did come they had no trouble getting home.



Mr. and Mrs. Ira Gilmour and baby.



Carl Gilmour riding a big buck.

EMIL GLIEGE FAMILY STORY

by Elaine Dick

Excerpts from an autobiography written by Emil Gliege and dedicated to his wife Emma for their fortieth wedding anniversary July 20, 1967.

I was born on a farm in Lazinski, Poland, on September 10, 1901, to Christian parents. I lived and worked there until 1923 when I decided to immigrate to Canada. I made this decision after hearing about this country from my uncle Karl Gliege in Laird, Saskatchewan.

On July 9, 1923, I boarded the "Empress of France" and came to Canada. I travelled by train to the home of my relatives in Saskatchewan.

In April, 1925, I came west to Clairmont, Alberta, where I worked on farms and in a lumber camp until the spring of 1927 when I rented some land and seeded it. After seeding, I returned to Saskatchewan and on July 20, 1927, I married Emma Schultz. We returned to Clairmont to harvest a bumper crop on our rented land.

Due to the bumper crop in 1926-27 at Clairmont, the price of land went up. On June 9, 1928, we filed on a

homestead in Peoria. Travelling to and from the homestead was done with horses and wagon over poor bush roads - about 55 miles one way. On November 29, 1929, our first baby was added to our family. In the summer, sometimes little Amanda was left with her mother on the farm at Clairmont and I was here on the homestead making improvements. On April 10, 1931, we loaded our belongings into a railroad car in Clairmont and shipped it to Belloy, about 10 miles from our homestead.

During this time, a depression started which was to last for several years. With only a few acres under cultivation, low grain prices, no Family Allowance, no Welfare Assistance, it was indeed a hard task. There was so much work to be done at once - building, clearing, breaking, fencing, road building, etc. Land clearing was done by hand with an axe and brush scythe. Stumps big and tough were grubbed out by hand. Land breaking was done with horses and a walking brush breaker. It was usually wet and we had many mosquitoes. At times, we had to cover



Emil and Emma's Wedding Day - July 20, 1927.

our face with a net and carry a pail with smoke on the plow to protect the horses somewhat. In the spring when a few acres were ready for seeding, it became flooded with bush water and had to be ditched off by hand. Most of the road building work was done by volunteer labour by the early settlers. With a large family, often we had to rely on the Lord to supply our needs (Phil. 4:19) but we also enjoyed many spiritual blessings as we gathered in various homes for prayer and church services. I established and conducted a Sunday School with a group of children which I enjoyed for several years.

God blessed our union with ten children - six girls and four boys. Two boys and one girl died in infancy. They died in our home and are buried in Peoria. All our children, except two, were born in our home. Often professional help and service was not available due to the very poor roads.

Amanda Gliege married Harry Siemens who passed away some years ago. She has remarried and now resides in B.C. She has 2 children: Darlene and Larry.

Edna married Walter Shushinski. They live in Kelowna, B.C., and have 2 daughters: Ruth and Shirley.

Alma married Ohert Amundson from Eaglesham where they reside. They have 5 daughters: Cindy, Marlene, Geraldine, Wanda and Brenda.



Emil (60 years) and Emma - September 10, 1961.

Emil Jr. and his wife, Alice, live in Grande Prairie where they operate a tire shop. They have 5 children.

Esther spent some years as a missionary in Africa. She is now married and resides in Calgary with her husband and two sons.

Arnold lives with his wife and 4 children on a farm near Grande Prairie.

Elsie, the baby of the Gliege family, is single. She lives in Prince George where she works in the hospital.

Emil Gliege passed away on June 28, 1969.

Emma Gliege moved to the Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River. She married Robert Campbell in 1975. Mr. Campbell passed away in 1980. Emma still resides at Pleasant View Lodge.



Sleigh for family travel - February 3, 1936.

RICHARD G. GREEN

Coming from the city of Nottingham, England, on the maiden voyage of 'The Empress of Ireland' to the bald-headed prairie city of Calgary in the wintertime December 15th, 1906, was our introduction to Canada. The ship had leaked on our voyage and there was a foot of water in our cabin. The steward gave my mother a pair of rubber boots to tend to the wants of my brother Bill, 6 weeks old and myself 1 1/2 years old. Then there was a 5 day train ride in a colonist railway car to Calgary. My dad, who had immigrated to Calgary in 1905 awaited us. That winter was really a cold one. 1909 saw us trekking overland in a covered wagon to Youngstown, Alberta, to find the iron stake at the N.E. corner of Section 32, Range 8, Township 30, west of the 4th. Then to build a

sod house with walls 16" thick and a sod barn, for the horses and chickens. But that is another story.

My introduction to the Peace River country happened in 1930 when my wife, Ruth, and I travelled through in a homemade van, built on a Model-T Ford. I had the tools of my trade (shoemaker) and would stop for a few days of work in the small villages on the way north. We managed to get as far north as Fairview, before returning to Calgary. We drank the waters of the Peace River and the oldtimers said, "If you drink the water from the Peace River you will return, this is God's country." We did.

On March 26, 1948, arriving in a boxcar in Wanham, we unloaded our old Buick and drove downtown to the hotel for dinner. Mrs. Bud Ireland said,

"Where did you come from with that Buick?"

"Calgary", I said.

"Impossible! the road is not passable", she answered. Then I told her I had come by train. We were one of the 32 families picked by the Government of Alberta by a draw from 240 applicants to settle on 32 units that were brushed, cleared and plowed by O.B. Lassiter from Chin, Alberta. We signed up a contract to farm the land and remit to the government 1/3 share of the crop for 7 years, and then 1/8 of the crop for the next 13 years. I cannot say it was entirely a success. Some of us had the pioneer spirit, or should I say that we had burned too many bridges behind us. A few of us still remain here - the Reigers, Hank and Muriel; the Kreftings, Joan and Art, Dwane and Ronda; the Haley family, George and Terry; the Greens, Dick and Arnold, Andy and Lil; the Bosomworths, Frank, James, Debora, Darrel.

WANHAM VETERAN PROJECT ASSOCIATION

This is the name of the association that was formed at the instigation of the government committee, in order to facilitate communication between government departments and the Wanham settlers. The settlers would meet in the schoolhouse once a month, to iron out any differences or beefs that would come up in the district north of Wanham, Township 79, Range 2, and 3. We usually had a social or card game after the meeting. The roll call at a meeting could contain the names of settlers, eg:

President: W.B. Martin

Secretary: R.G. Green

J.F. Malony

A.R. Hill

Ed. Anderson

Kieth Pearson

Jack Jennings

Tom Tanton

Arny Hill

Roy Krough

Albert Desharnais

S.L. Bosomworth

James McNamee (Micky)

Joe Maloney

Hank Reiger

Vic Krefting

Dennis Palmer

William Haley
 George Lamarquand
 Jack Johnston
 Curtis Mills
 Myron Crocker
 Weller Connell
 Marrion Moore
 Lester Erickson
 Gordon Cosford
 Joe Kennedy
 Bill McInnes
 Alphy Haines
 Cliff Wager
 William Curtis
 Basil Murphy
 Wilfred Martin
 Seelly
 Fred Shattuck

It is to be remembered that we were all veterans of World War II, and we had very little money saved up on joining the forces and very little money on discharge from the forces. Actually, we started farming on a shoestring. But, as we were all in the same boat, our neighbor's troubles were the same as ours, so there was a certain rapport between all of us.

In retrospect, we all had pretty good times. Our organization organized a yearly picnic at the Burnt River crossing, to which we invited Wanham residents. Free ice cream was ladled out. Races and other games were enjoyed. The pillow fight (two youngsters sitting on a cross pole) had to be eliminated on account of one youth spraining his ankle. Mrs. Dot McNamee always brought fried chicken. Boy, was it good! A bee was formed to clear the picnic grounds and to build an open air booth to sell goods.

PIONEER LADIES AND WINE

Actually, the wives were the pioneers trying to put a home together under the most trying circumstances. (trying to make dinner while fighting off mosquitoes, picking wild strawberries and saskatoons on a hot day, preserving over a hot stove with sweat running off your nose.) Yes, ladies, you are the pioneers of Canada! Mrs. Jack Johnston was noted for making the most potent wine. One day our grader man, Micky McNamee, dropped in for a chat or maybe to get a bolt for one broken on the grader. Anyhow, when he started the grader up, he ran it right into the ditch. Afterwards he was heard to say, "Boy, can she make good wine".

Our lawyer was Tom Tanton. Any questions on law could be referred to him and he was always kind enough to straighten it out. Fred Shattuck could be depended on to lift something that we could not and he always obliged. One big event in our lives here was the opening of the new bridge across the Burnt River. We named it "Lassiter". It was a gala occasion on August 12, 1951. Over 500 people were there to watch district commander of the legion, Mr. Stretton, cut the ribbon of red, white and blue. Mr. O.B. Lassiter (contractor) who opened up the 70,000 acres for the settlers, expressed his appreciation of the honor accorded him in giving his name to the bridge.



*Susan Watson and
 Marjorie Greenfield -
 1948.*

MARJORIE AND FRANK GREENFIELD

Marjorie was born at Govan, Saskatchewan, and I was born at Gibbs, Saskatchewan. After the war we went to work for Lassiter. While waiting for Lassiter to arrive, we lived in a tent on the main street in Spirit River, and worked for Spennys mill at Whitburn.

We came to Wanham in the fall of 1946 and I worked as a mechanic in Lassiter's garage, which was situated on the opposite side of the street from where the Wanham Hotel is now located.

We lived in a tent in the bush, about three blocks east of Gaspard's cafe. Then we rented a 10 x 12 foot granary from Lester Olsen and combined that with the tent. Marjorie worked for Gaspard for a year or so. I drove a cat at Lassiter's, across the Burnt. Then we moved along with the clearing outfit - first to where I think Elhorns now farm. Finally the outfit moved a couple of miles north of Eaglesham, where my farm was cleared. We farmed from 1951 until 1972, then moved to the west coast and from there to Saskatchewan. After a couple of years there with dust and blizzards, we were homesick once more for B.C. so went out to Kelowna, where we now reside.

Our son was in the navy for eight or nine years. He was born in Eaglesham and now lives in Manning Park, B.C. Our daughter is married to a millwright and lives in Kitimat, B.C.

BEAR FOR BILL

We used to drive from Wanham to Lassiter's camp every morning, to be there for breakfast. One morning we came across a young bear so we shot it and dressed it. I brought it home and we gave Mr. and Mrs. Trumpower a roast. She said, "Don't tell Bill what it is". So we went over there for supper and Bill said, "Nellie, that's the best pork I ever tasted". Then he stopped, looked down at his plate and said, "That's bear meat"! That was the end of Bill's supper.

RALPH AND MAURICE GRIFFITH

by Mona Griffith

Ralph Griffith came to homestead in the Peace District

in 1923. He brushed and broke some of his land by hand. He hunted and trapped in the winter months to keep himself in meat, and sold the furs for grubstakes. He also worked for Oscar Pittman at Bear Lake for some extra income. In 1929, Ralph was joined by his younger brother, Maurice, who was to live with him for the next nine years.

During this time, which was the dirty thirties, the two brothers sometimes shot moose and deer and took them to the more populated Sexsmith District, where they sold them for five dollars apiece.

As time passed, things began to get better. Maurice filed on his own homestead in 1935. After meeting Mona Manary, he filed on another homestead quarter. He built a log cabin 16' x 24', which consisted of two rooms. Maurice and Mona were married in November, 1938, and made this cabin their home for the next thirteen years.

Maurice and George Wendland set up a shingle mill, which provided lots of hard work and a little income. Maurice also went out to work at other jobs, as the homestead did not provide sufficient income. This work included bulldozing in 1940, Alaska highway construction, and road building in the Peoria District. Maurice and Mona also tried their hand at building cupboards, much to the pleasure of neighborhood wives.



Mona and Maurice at the back of their cabin - 1939.

FISHING

Although times were hard, Maurice, Mona, Harold and Elaine Dick found time to go fishing. One time in particular, they loaded their car with all the gear and set off. Harold went on horseback because they could only go part way by car. When the road ended they loaded everything, including Mona and Elaine, on the horse. They tied the fish net to the horses' tail, that being the only place left!

Arriving at the river, they set up their tents using six poles or tree stumps and an old tarp. Now they set their net in the river and caught some fish, and even tried some



Maurice and Ralph - 1939.

swimming. When night came they settled in their tent for a well deserved rest, only to discover to their dismay, that they had company! Mice ... lots of them! Maurice and Harold dug out their flashlight and gun and began shooting mice! No one had much sleep that night.

The Griffith's neighbors and good friends included the Alfred Amundsens, Halvor Hegnas, George Wendlands, Charlie Leggets, Arnold Evensons, Harold Dicks, Jim Beards and Anton Kozak.



Camp shelter - fishing trip to Smokey in 1948. Harold Dick, Elaine MacDonald.

In 1942, Maurice and Mona started their family with Gail, now Mrs. Terry Steinke of Sexsmith, Alberta. Gail has five children. Following Gail was Colin, in 1946, and Robert, in 1950. Colin married Valerie Torgerson. They have two children and live in Fort Nelson, B.C. Robert married Barbara Wold. They also have two children. They live in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Gail was the only one to go to school in East Peoria,

where she attended for three years. Her first teacher was Elaine MacDonald (Dick).

Due to illness, Maurice and Mona left the homestead and moved to Sexsmith in 1952. Maurice bought grain for a few years; later ran a grocery store, and eventually became a salesman for Northern Metallic in Grande Prairie. He passed away suddenly in a car accident in 1976, at the age of 64 years.

Ralph remained on his homestead until 1965. Still unmarried, he moved to Grande Prairie, where he now resides in Central Park Lodge.



Rev. Harold Grove and his wife, Mary - 1972.

GROVE, REVEREND HAROLD W. AND MARY J.

The Reverend Harold W. Grove was born in Vancouver, B.C. and his wife Mary was born near Cornwall, Ontario. They came to Wanham on May 20, 1964, after ministering to the Brownvale, Dixonville and Smith Mills area for over twelve years. Prior to that time Rev. Grove spent five years at Chauvin, Alberta, his first appointment after graduating from Knox College, Toronto, Ontario. He was ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in May, 1947.

On May 21, 1964, the Rev. Grove's designation service was held in Munro Presbyterian Church, Blueberry Mountain. He was appointed to the pastoral charge of Wanham, Belloy, Blueberry Mountain and Silver Valley. During the five years Rev. and Mrs. Grove were in Wanham, he was active in a number of organizations along with his church duties.

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In 1965, the Heart Valley church building was moved into Wanham and set on blocks behind the main church. In 1966, a cement foundation was laid and the building joined to the existing church, to be used for a church hall

for all church activities. On Dec. 18, 1966, a new electric organ was given and dedicated in the church from Miss M.A. McKenzie of Vancouver, B.C., a friend of the Grove's. The Canadian Girls in Training group, led by Mrs. Grove, purchased five groups of four-light fixtures for the church and a black rubber mat, placed in the aisle of the church. The group also had the roof and exterior of the church and manse painted. In Belloy, Wanham and Blueberry Mountain, Rev. and Mrs. Grove had Explorer and Children of the Church groups, as well as C.G.I.T.

AIR CADETS

Beginning in Sept., 1964, Rev. Grove (being an Officer with the Fairview Air Cadet Squadron No. 224), took a number of Belloy and Wanham boys each Wednesday evening to attend the Air Cadet Parade meetings in Fairview, a distance of approximately 40 miles. One of the boys, Loran McVittie, travelled five years with Rev. Grove to Fairview. Later, Loran became Commanding Officer of the Peace River Air Cadet Squadron, while he was employed in Peace River. A number of the boys attended Air Cadet Camps.

BELLOY BIRCH HILLS JUNIOR FOREST WARDENS

In 1965, Rev. Grove helped to instruct the Junior Forest Wardens. In Sept., 1966, he became supervisor of this group of from 28 to 32 boys, holding meetings at the back of the Presbyterian Church. A number of the Wardens attended summer camp near Hinton, Alberta.

The Rev. Grove was Padre of the Belloy and Wanham Canadian Legions, and also helped with the Wanham Library. In Dec., 1966, Mary Grove became secretary to the principal of the Fairview Agricultural and Vocational College for three years.

On May 26, 1969, the Rev. and Mary Grove left Wanham for Toronto, Ont. (Port Credit, Ont.). In September, 1969, he enrolled in the Library Science Course at the University of Toronto, graduating in May, 1970.

In October, 1970, Rev. Grove was called and inducted into the Indian Head - Qu'Appelle pastoral charge in Saskatchewan, where he is still ministering at the present date. (January 5, 1978).

DANIEL AND ELIZABETH GULICK

by Jessie Sawers (Gulick)

Daniel and his wife, Elizabeth left Billings, Montana, in the spring of 1911. Travelling with them were their two children, Bertha, age twelve, (born April 6, 1899) and John, age ten, (born October 2, 1901). Daniel's elderly father, Louis, accompanied the family to assist driving the three wagons. Four head of horses per wagon were often required, depending on the roads and innumerable mudholes they encountered. Being stuck in the mud at least three times a day was normal procedure. Matt Gary, Elizabeth's brother was also among the party, to aid in the herding of 85 head of horses they were bringing to

their homestead.

On October 23, 1912, Louis Gulick and his son, Daniel filed on homesteads in the Kleskun Lake area, the price being \$10.00 per quarter. Louis' quarter was the SE 1/4 30-73-6-3, while Daniel's was the SW 1/4 30-73-6-3. Here the family started their homestead, making hay around the lake for their cattle, and freighting their winter supplies from Grouard by sleigh and work horses.

The Gulicks had some fine racing stock in their herd, and actively participated in many rodeos in the Grande Prairie and Clairmont areas. Both Daniel and Elizabeth won many races; Daniel in relay races, changing saddles to different horses as many as three times per race, and Elizabeth specializing in the ladies horse races.

Life on the homestead was not all fun and horse races for the young couple. There were long, hard days just to have enough for the family to eat, and clothes to wear, not to mention the long, hot days of cutting, raking and stacking hay for the stock. They must eat, too, as it was upon them that the Gulicks were dependent for their livelihood.

As well as working side by side with her husband during the day, Elizabeth attended to the many chores of a housewife, cooking, cleaning, churning butter, washing by hand on a scrub board, and keeping a watchful eye on the children.

During the many rodeos Dan, Lizzie and family attended, their daughter Bertha met and fell in love with a bronc rider and horse dealer named Bert Sales. They were married on June 25, 1917, and lived in Grande Prairie where Bert owned and operated a livery barn, one of the few buildings there at the time.

Homesteading was very difficult, to say the least, and when Dan's father passed away in 1919, the couple decided to sell the homestead and return to Montana. John, a young fellow of 17, decided not to make the trip with his folks, but to strike out on his own. He got a job herding cattle for English and Calkin, near Rycroft.

Being so far away from their two children, and the lure of the Peace in their blood, the Gulicks stayed on their ranch in Montana for only a year. They once again sold out, and made the long, tedious journey back to Alberta, this time buying property by Kadot Lake. Here they settled on their ranch, raising cattle and horses from 1920 to 1948.

In 1948, Dan and Elizabeth moved to a farm on the Burnt River, where they stayed until Dan's death in 1952. At this time, Elizabeth moved to her son John's farm in Heart Valley, where she remained for eleven years. In 1962, she had a slight stroke, and was taken to Grande Prairie Hospital, (Auxiliary) where she remained until her death, at the age of 93, in 1969.

In the meantime, daughter Bertha and husband Bert sold their livery business and moved to a farm on the banks of the Burnt River. They had two daughters, Leona (Olsen) now living in Utah, U.S.A., and Geraldine, (Culvor) now living in Billings, Montana, and one son Lenard, married and living on the original Sales farm.

Bertha passed away on April 25, 1929, at the young age of 28 years, while Bert remained on the farm, raising his three children single-handed. Bert passed away in 1968.

Both he and his wife are buried in the Spirit River Municipal Cemetery.

Daniel and Elizabeth's son, John, had met and married Mary Margaret Thompson of Rycroft. The wedding was held on December 24, 1925, in the dining room of the Rycroft Hotel, which was owned and operated by Mary Margaret's mother, Alberta Thompson.

The Thompsons had come to Rycroft from Edmonton by sleigh in the winter of 1912. The family included father, David, mother, Alberta, daughters, Oma, Margaret, Gladys. Sons Samuel and Ernest were born later in Rycroft. They settled on a homestead 2 1/2 miles west of Rycroft.

After their marriage, John and Marg bought a homestead in Heart Valley. NW 1/4 8-75-3-6 Over the course of time, they acquired a great deal more land, raised cattle and horses, farmed, operated a sawmill, did commercial trucking, and finally entered the construction business, with three or four caterpillars.

All of this came about over the course of time, along with twelve children, six boys and six girls, nine of whom are still living today. To date, all children are married and live within a sixty mile radius of their original home, with the exception of the youngest son, Pat.

The children are as follows:

1. David Daniel - December 12, 1926 - July 18, 1947.
2. Lloyd James - December 11, 1927 - September 29, 1946.
3. Gordon Ray - January 25, 1929 - June 25, 1954.
4. Mary Elaine - April 4, 1930 - married Maurice Burns, (deceased January 25, 1964) now Mrs. Robert McNally and farming in Teepee Creek area. They have one son - Daniel.
5. and 6., Twins, Margaret and John, (Peggy and Jack) - born November 11, 1934. Peggy is married to Lloyd Dreger and lives on a farm near Woking. They have three children - Leon, Ivor, Roxanne and one grand-daughter, Kimberly. (Parents, Leon and Karen Viercant).
- Jack is married to Greta Goryniuk. They live on a farm one mile from the original Gulick homestead. They have five children, Colleen, Darlene, Martin, David and Randy. They have two grand-daughters, Jody and Corrina. (Parents Colleen and Ernest Hemmingway.)
7. Ella May Lorraine - April 28, 1936, married to James Sawers - now living in Grande Prairie. They have two children, James and Linda and four grandchildren - Robby and Carla, children of James and Gaynelle (Lefley). Gordon and Talara - children of Linda and Lennard Chmiloir).
8. Jessie Elizabeth - May 12, 1937, married to Stanley Sawers - residing in Wanham. They have two daughters, Debra, a teacher, and Sandra, and one grand-daughter, Jena. (Parents, Debra and Bruce Olson.) Jessie has taught at Wanham School for eighteen years.
9. Harvey Wayne - November 18, 1941, married to Vivian White, farming the original Gulick homestead. They have three children - Connie, Simon and James.
10. Thelma Eileen - October 16, 1944, married to Gus Dreger and farming near Woking. They have three children - Daniel, Ellen and Dean.
11. Ronald Patton - October 8, 1947, married to Joyce Dalglish - residing on an acreage at Fort St. John, B.C.

They have two children, Gordon and Patty Jo. Following the Gulick tradition, Pat and his family are avid rodeo participants.

12. Shirley Alberta - September 23, 1949 - married to Raymond Shofner and farming south of Spirit River. They have two children, Tammy and Garnet.

John and Marg lived on their original homestead in Heart Valley for forty-five years, until John's death on July 1, 1970. The following year, Marg moved to Rycroft, where she still resides. Son Harvey has taken over the family farm.

To date, Daniel and Elizabeth have six great-grandsons bearing the Gulick name.

WILLIAM A. HALLOCK

by Shirley

William A. Hallock came to the West Vale District and filed N.W. 1/4 13-76-4-W6th in 1928. Mr. Hallock spent the winter in Didsbury, Alberta and returned in 1929 to build a house and was joined later that summer by his wife Mary and infant son Alfred. A daughter, Shirley, was born a year later. In 1932 a son, Darrel, was born. Mr. William Hallocks' wife, Mary passed away in 1933.

His daughter, Shirley moved to Woodstock, Ontario in 1949 and married Robert Cowing in 1953. She resides there with her husband and family of 5, 3 girls and 2 boys.

William Hallock acquired another quarter in 1949 and continued farming up until he passed away in 1967, at which time his 2 sons, Alfred and Darrel farmed the land.

The original homestead, N.W. 1/4 13-76-4-W6th was sold in 1974.



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hallock on their wedding day.

PIONEER DAD

by Sam Parlee

In the year 1929, settlers were still pouring into the Peace from the south and central parts of this and other western provinces. In May of that year came Bill Hallock into the West Vale District. His carload of settlers effects, which had been loaded at Didsbury, landed in Wanham at night like most settlers cars did in those days.

Bill crawled out of the boxcar with his dog, Bing, and commenced to unload his wares. This meant lugging out all the component parts of the different pieces of farm machinery, and assembling the wagon to which he hitched his four horses and into which he loaded what he could handle of his household effects.



Bill Hallock with his three children, Alfred, Darrel and Shirley.

The road leading to Bill's homestead went through the Birch Hills. The narrow slit in the virgin forest had been graded with some stretches corduroyed and with pole bridges on the watercourses. However the last five miles of the thirteen to the homestead had no improvement. The wheels of the old-fashioned high-wheeled wagon cut down in the springy forest soil and the underlying roots caused the vehicle to rock and sway from side to side. Some of those trips took five hours to go one way. With some help from the neighbors, Bill threw up a shack and made the place ready for his wife Mary to come to, along with baby Alfred.

BILL BORROWS THE TOP BUGGY

Having written for his wife to come, Bill set off to meet her at the train with the buggy. Evidently dear Mary had failed to get the letter from him saying that he was ready for her. She didn't get to ride in the buggy but arrived at a later date and came out with him in the wagon.

Mary was good natured, good looking and capable, and in so many ways was an ideal pioneering type. She

could run a mower, rake or binder, do any of the work that is usually done by a man.

This very pleasant and romantic beginning was to be short-lived as tragedy stalked the little homestead of this young couple and their wee family.

On September 1st, 1933, Bill was left with three small children, Alfred aged 4 years and 9 months. Shirley 3 and Darrel 14 months of age.

The depression was hard upon us by that time. Bill could not afford to hire help and like most in that day, he depended on horses to work his land. This was no easy undertaking - doing housework and fieldwork, along with caring for the children.

The first year a neighbor, Mr. Jake Epp, along with Mr. Buchanan, exchanged their help for the use of the horses, as they had none of their own.

Eventually, Bill carried on almost exclusively on his own. He had a box on the implement into which he would place one child while he drove and held one on his knee. Alfred followed behind except at seeding time when there was room for everyone on the drill.

Mary's last request had been that the family be kept together. She went with Bill's promise, which he faithfully kept through the years.

One time in the midst of the depression I said, "Have you ever given any thought to remarriage, Bill?" He replied in the affirmative, then added. "I've always been concerned that a step-mother might not be kind to the children."

He never married again and was greatly loved by all three of his children.

As the family grew they were a great help, doing chores after school, such as milking and feeding the poultry and livestock.

All three children were very resourceful and at an early age they could drive a horse to school and back, a distance of 8 miles a day. In the first year all three would fall asleep in the buggy on their return trip. Pat, the one-eyed sorrel, was faithful and never failed to bring them into the yard and wait for his youthful drivers to unhitch him from the rig.

In winter all four people went together to the bush for wood on Saturdays.

On one occasion, Bill was preparing for the wood cutters to come. In those days neighbors helped each other to saw up firewood with a circular saw powered by a small portable engine. Bill drove up to the barn with a team and stepped off to unhitch the traces. The team started forward and trapped his leg between the stoneboat and the door casing. The leg was broken and Bill lay for some time before Wib Buchanan found him. He had come to help with the wood and was the first to arrive. Laying the suffering man on the hand-sleigh, he was able to haul him to the house.

The children were at school and were on the way home when they were informed that their dad had been taken to the hospital. The little trio took it very hard as they were split three ways during their dad's convalescence. Shirley went to stay at the Beamers, Darrel at Art Johnson's place, and Alfred at Wilson's.

Bill walked with a limp, nevertheless anyone whoever exchanged work with him found that they always

received more than fair returns in time and effort from this man who had to be both mother and dad.

When they put up hay in those early years, when the kids were small, Shirley would ride on the rake with her dad. Her doll went with her as she sat in her box or on his knee. The boys were robust and loaded with energy, always playing together in the hay swaths or tramping the load or stack for their dad.

Bill set the family a good example and took the family to services that were held by my brother, Bob, at Tom's house or in the log school. As the years went by all members of the home became very skillful at house-keeping.

While visiting at Shirley's home in Ontario, Bill passed away out in the barn where he was feeding the cattle at the age of seventy-five.

Here was a man who will long be remembered as a courageous pioneer, one who denied himself much to carry out the wishes of his partner who was taken from him at an early age.



Bill Hallock, Alfred, Shirley, Darrell - 1951.

MR. AND MRS. J.J. HARRINGTON

by Helen Harrington

Ed's folks came from England, settling in Peterborough, Ontario, then to Toronto, coming to Grande Prairie in 1921. In 1928, they went to Edmonton, returning to Wanham in 1930.

Of the six Harrington children, Ed, Frank and Archie were born in England. Joe, Onagh and Cyril were born in Ontario.

When Mr. and Mrs. Harrington Sr. arrived in Wanham with Cyril and Onagh, they lived in the log house of Lerigers. They went from here to their homestead three miles south of town. Mr. Harrington worked with Ed in the Frontier Lumber yard and also in the Wanham Mercantile and the post office, which Ed had for many years. Later the Harringtons moved to town, residing in the living quarters of the lumber yard.

Onagh worked in Grande Prairie in Nelson and Archibald's Ladies Wear. Cyril left for Edmonton along about 1935.

When Mildred passed away, leaving two small daughters, Ed's folks moved in to carry on the home, which was about four lots north of the hotel. A few months later, Ed and Helen were married, and the senior Harringtons moved into the little house on the hill, south of town - just north of the the old nurses' home. Ap-



Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Harrington.

proximately 1943, Mr. and Mrs. Harrington moved to Edmonton, where they lived until Mrs. Harrington passed away, in October of 1944. After that, Mr. Harrington lived with Onagh in Holden, Red Deer and Calgary, and later with Ed and Helen. Then he moved to the Senior Citizen's residence in Spirit River. He died in Rosehaven Nursing Home in Camrose in December, 1962 at almost 93 years of age.

EDMUND JOHN HARRINGTON

by Helen Harrington

As chairman of the Peace Town Planning Commission, active in the Rycroft Elk's Lodge serving as exalted Ruler, and then a two year term as District Deputy for District No. 11A, Ed Harrington was well known in Wanham and surrounding districts.

Ed worked with the Wanham Legion and received his fifty year pin as a Legion member. He was Mayor of Wanham for several years, also Fire Chief and Secretary-treasurer of the town.

He served several years on the Spirit River Hospital Board, and held that position when the new Central Peace Hospital was opened.

Ed also ran as a Liberal candidate in two elections during the time that Harper Prowse was provincial leader of the Liberal party

Ed was active in the Curling Association, sports and C.O.C.O. He belonged to the Catholic Church, where he sang in the choir. For many years he sang at the November 11th service.

In the early years, he played baseball and was said to be the best centre fielder in the country, and had the reputation of a super "base-stealer."

He had one of the first cars in Wanham, and many times he was told he should get a "pilot's" license. One time he had a new Hudson, and was showing it off on a run to the station and back. Jack Sangster, (R.C.M.P.) saw him, and on his return asked Ed, "What's the matter - couldn't you get into high?"

To sum it all up, Ed actually participated in all phases of community life. He retired to Edmonton in June, 1974, and passed away April 9th, 1978.

BOARD OF TRADE by Ed Harrington

For many years I had a lot do do with the Board of Trade and can remember a few details of interest.

The Central Peace Board of Trade Association was formed, with members from Slave Lake west to Dawson Creek. The purpose was to work towards the completion of highway 49 and also to get a bridge at Watino. I was



J.J. Harrington and friends at the farm home on the hill.

elected chairman, and held that position as long as the association existed, about five years, if I remember correctly. We succeeded very well, as we got the bridge built and officially opened by the Honorable Gordon Taylor assisted by the Honorable A.O. Fimrite. This wasn't accomplished without some disagreement, such as some of the French areas insisting on a religious service. I eventually took this matter up with Archbishop Routhier, who settled it by saying he would not even attend if there was disagreement. It had been taken up at several Board of Trade Association meetings and the majority voted it down. I spoke to F. Paquin and he agreed on a November religious opening. Well, once the official opening was over, the subject was forgotten. It poured rain all that day, still the bridge opening went ahead as scheduled. Several items had to be cancelled. However, there was a wrestling match in the Watino hall and Julian Kiniski was one of the headline wrestlers! This was followed by a dance.

Another experience was when I was selected as Wanham's representative on a committee to go to Victoria to interview Premier Bennett about extending the P.G.E. railway to the Peace country. Others on the committee were Mac Perkins of Sexsmith, Elmer Logan of Grande Prairie, also a representative from Dawson Creek. We went by car and at that time the highway left much to be desired. We were received by the Premier and some of his cabinet and advisers. We found that he was well versed in the matter, and advised us that it was the intention of his government to proceed in the not too distant future. This was completed in a few years.

BIG ROAD CONFERENCE

Another experience of mine was helping to represent

Wanham, along with the late Mr. L.A. Leriger, at what was then called The Big Road Conference. We were fighting to have a road built from Barrhead to Snipe Lake via Assinaboine and then spread towards Grande Prairie one way and Peace River and the central Peace in the other direction. We were out-voted mostly by Edmonton boards who wanted to go by Whitecourt to Valleyview and then branch off to Grande Prairie one way and Peace River the other. This was eventually done, as you know, and the branch-off to Peace River was built through some of the heaviest timbered land in the Peace country. Gradually the area in and around Snipe Lake was settled and it is now a good agricultural area.

Wanham had one of the most active Boards of Trade in the country, and I had the honor of being chairman and also acted as secretary-treasurer for a time. Needless to say, there were many others who worked and helped, boosting for better roads and better train service along with other things.

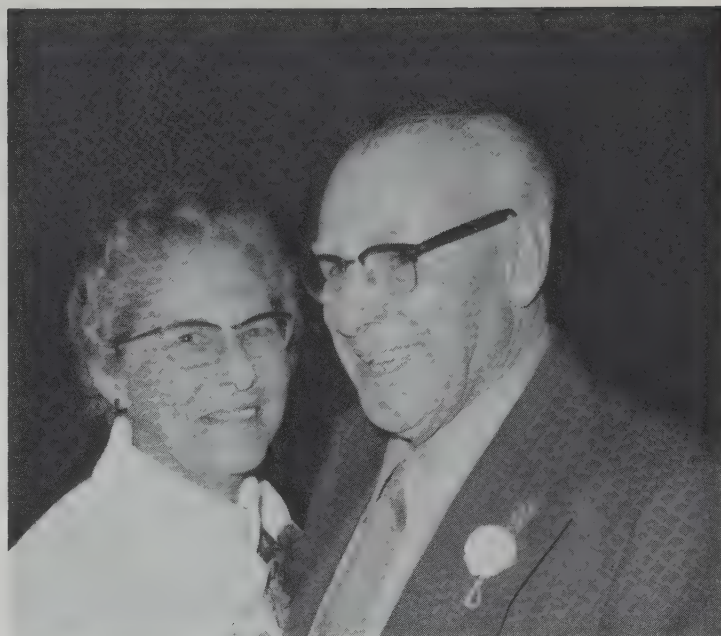
HELEN HARRINGTON

Wanham became my home in July, 1936. I had accepted the position of district nurse and received a telegram from the secretary of the nursing association to report, I think it was July 17th. I travelled by Northern Alberta Railways, arriving early in the morning and was met by the above mentioned secretary, Mr. E.J. Harrington. My first meal in Wanham was at Ed's place and his mother served me breakfast - thick oatmeal porridge! I never did like the stuff since I was a farm kid and we *had* to eat it. Of course, I ate it that morning too.

I had no orientation for the position of a district nurse but I was young and didn't worry. I soon found out what was expected of me, and I had no head nurse or doctor to turn to for advice, like I'd had working in the hospital. Travel then wasn't very great either - usually by wagon, democrat or sleighs. Ed had one of the first cars in Wanham. In fact, he was the first one to go to Peoria by car. That was before I came. The secretary really looked after the nurse - far more than his duties demanded, so much so, that we were engaged November 11th of that year, and married the following June. That year was full of experiences. I often had to use the railway speeder when the roads to Spirit River - the nearest doctor - were impassable. I have ridden on the front of a wagon with a chap leading the way and hacking out a roadway. But I met many unforgettable friends.

In our marriage we were blessed with two daughters, Ruth and Lynn, and of course I had a wedding gift of our two older daughters, Jean and Elaine. So with five females to look after, Ed had a busy life. Throughout the years, I did relief nursing when the resident nurse was away or on sick leave. Later, in 1957, I again accepted the position of municipal nurse - this time under the Provincial Government. I continued until May, 1974, when, due to Ed's health, we sold out in Wanham and moved here to Edmonton.

Born Marguerite Helen Faulks in London, England, I lived in Alberta from 1913 on. I took my nurses training at the University of Alberta Hospital 1930-1933. After



Helen and Ed Harrington's Farewell Party.

graduation I did some home nursing; then two years at the Barrhead Hospital. From there I came to Wanham, where life was really good to me and I shall never forget that little town and the many friends I had, many of whom visit or phone when they are in the city.



The Harrington Family. Back Row: Lynn, Ruth, Elaine and Jean. Front Row: Helen and Ed.

JEAN E. MERCIER

(nee Harrington)

During the summer months we would all gather and pick sides for cops and robbers. The favorite hiding spot for this was among the piles of lumber in the Frontier Lumber yard.

5 MILES IN 50 BELOW

Grade IX and X were taught in the old original school (1942 - 1943) where the lunches would freeze on the floor, so had to be kept on a table at the back of the room.

When the weather got very cold, the students who made it to school pulled their desks into a circle around the stove, in order to get their feet close to the heat. Water spilled on the floor would freeze immediately. Even when the temperature was -50° the older Jakubowski girls, Francis and Kazimira, would always be among the very few to arrive at school, even though they had five miles to walk.

One of the most common entertainment events was to meet the train and see who arrived or departed.

During the winter we spent many hours sleigh riding on the nurses hill or skating on Camerons dam.

Bush fires caused a great deal of excitement almost every spring. We could spend an occasional night on the house roof with a pail of water or sitting in the woodpile. When the forest fire was fanned by a strong wind, large chunks of burning coals would blow across by our home.

ELAINE HARRINGTON MARTIN

I was born May 5, 1934, in Grand Prairie, Alberta. My grandparents, Harrington's Sr., were among the first settlers in Wanham. My parents, Helen and Ed, lived and worked in Wanham for 40 years before retiring to Edmonton. There were 4 girls in our family and my sisters are Jean, Ruth and Lynn.

I took all my schooling in Wanham, starting grade 1 with Miss Wishart, and ending high school with Mr. Russell. On leaving school, I joined the R.C.A.F. and spent 3 marvelous years making new friends and seeing many parts of Canada. In 1957, I married Kenneth Martin from Watrous, Saskatchewan, and we moved to B.C. where we have lived these past 22 years. Our children are Debra Lynn, who lives and works in Edmonton; and 2 boys, Bruce and Randall, still at home.



The Harrington Business.

HAUSER FAMILY

by Clara (Hauser) Johnson

Early in 1928, anyone passing by a certain house in the town of Neudorf, Saskatchewan, would probably have noticed an unusual amount of activity. Joe and Lizzie Hauser, with their two children, were preparing for a move. Thinking about this move now, some fifty years later, I can imagine what a wrench it must have been for Joe and Lizzie, to leave all their friends and relatives behind, and venture out into the unknown; it must have



Joe and Lizzie Hauser's farm homestead, 1930. Joe, Lizzie, Ben and Dora, Mrs. Frank Hauser with her child, Nora, Johnny and Elizabeth, Clara Hauser, age 8 years.

been very hard. However, there seemed little hope of bettering themselves in Neudorf (Joe was a barber, and Lizzie helped out as a seamstress) - and so, they must finally have reached a difficult decision: to move to the Peace River country of Alberta. Joe was 38 years of age, Lizzie was 35 ... it was now or never, while they were still young ... but they must have almost felt as though they were going to another planet.

First, Joe and fifteen-year-old Ben loaded a boxcar with the family goods and chattels -- the household furniture, bedding and clothing; some farm equipment; two horses, cows and chickens -- and food for the animals and themselves. Off they went. (Originally, their plan was to go to Brownvale, but as it chanced Joe met one of the Reiswig brothers at the N.A.R. depot in Edmonton, and was given such glowing reports of the Wanham - Peoria area that he decided to go there instead.) Lizzie and shy little six-year-old Clara followed in April, 1928. It was Clara's first train trip and she was filled with awe and wonder passing through Edmonton with all its bright lights and the Legislative Building looking like a pink fairyland-palace at night. The journey from Neudorf to Wanham must have taken at least a week, in those days ... but eventually it came to an end: Lizzie and Clara arrived at a certain point in the wilderness, some 350 miles from Edmonton, and were informed that, "This is Wanham". The conductor put them off the train a half-mile down the track from where Joe and Ben were waiting with team and wagon, and the train chugged off ... however, the family was soon reunited.

Clara's memories of those very early days is somewhat vague. She remembers there was a homestead in the West Vale area (near where the Funks settled), and still shudders at the recollection of driving over the narrow muddy trail to see it. It was a frightening experience. That trip must have been more than enough to convince Lizzie that she had no intention of living that far from what passed as civilization. (Wanham and its 2 - 3 families). At any rate, the Hausers never did live on the homestead in West Vale. Instead, they camped for a few

months in a couple of empty granaries loaned to them by George MacDonald (this was on the Ward Place south of Wanham). Some time after that, Joe filed on another homestead, this time about two miles south of what now is the old Cemetery, about eight miles from Wanham. This homestead, almost entirely overgrown with heavy bush, was nestled at the foot of the Birch Hills, with a spring of fresh clear water farther up the hill. Moose and deer and bears were other occupants of the territory, in fact, a bear would occasionally come down to mingle with the cattle, which was rather disconcerting, but the dog Ben had acquired always gave loud warning of the unwanted visitor. The Hauser's house was quite large and comfortable, for those times; it was surrounded by a tall fence made of small straight saplings. The nearest neighbor was Nathan Bramlett, an old gentleman who was distinguished by his jet-black hair and silvery beard, and a soft speaking voice. Other neighbors were Nellie and Bill Trumpower, Frank Carpenter, and off to the east, the Bankheads. The Hausers must have lived there for a year or two; long enough, Clara remembers, to be visited one summer by the Frank Hausers (Joe's twin brother) from Neudorf, and one winter by Dora



Farewell Party for Clara Hauser - 1955. Back Row, Left to Right: Jim Rutherford, Ed Harrington, George MacDonald, Lusco Christenson, W. Trumpower. Middle Row: Nellie Trumpower, Olive MacDonald, Elizabeth Hauser. Front Row: Esther Christensen, Mae Rutherford, Helen Harrington, Clara Hauser.

Niebergall (Lizzie's sister, now Mrs. Art Tansem) of Vernon ... and there was much fun and socializing, despite the distance people had to drive.

Once more, however, this homestead proved to be too far from civilization, and particularly from a school, either in Wanham or Belloy. Joe had by this time settled upon the idea of being an Imperial Oil agent in Wanham (besides selling Case machinery, twine and so on), and built a shop with small living quarters and office attached. There he and Clara lived during the week, he attending to business and she going to school -- this is now 1929-30-31. Eventually there was another move, this one to a farm three and one-half miles south of Wanham. (What happened to the house on the "Belloy farm" remains a mystery). The farm south of Wanham had

some old log buildings on it, relics of a sawmill once owned and operated by the Reiswigs and/or Rottackers, and the family lived in one of these, until a new house was built. Clara recalls that their shelter had only a sod floor and a roof of rough boards covered with sawdust ... but it was cozy and warm and comfortable even in winter. With food (produce from the garden, moose meat and berries which had been canned), there was no sense of deprivation. The following year a new house was built, in a lovely grove of tall spruce trees, and here the Hauser family lived for about 10 years. Again the farm was almost entirely bushland, but this did not matter as the Hausers never farmed seriously, as a means of supporting themselves and only required a few acres cleared for a garden and a plot of feed-oats. Joe continued to commute between the homestead and town, carrying on his business. With his small income plus produce from farm and bush, as well as Lizzie's wizardry at transforming old clothes into new, everyone was always well-fed and well-clad. There was no lack of books, magazines and newspapers -- who remembers "*The Free Press Prairie Farmer*" and "*The Western Producer*" nowadays? and later, Clara was given a piano for her twelfth birthday, so there was soon music and singing, as well as the radio, to listen to. Despite the fact that this was The Hungry Thirties, it was a happy time. Again there were only a few close neighbors: old Mr. and Mrs. Munro, who later sold their farm to the Kandt family -- and about a mile south, on the hill, Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Harrington had a home for a short while.

Clara and Joe walked to school and to work, which meant getting up very early to make the two and one-half, later three and one-half mile, journey. In winter, it was a long cold walk ... but at least there was usually a ride home in the later afternoon with one of the farmers who had brought in a sled-full of grain from Peoria, Heart Valley or West Vale. Gradually, as the years passed, there were rides in a car or truck ... but that was yet to come.

Ben, always rather a loner, tinkered with machinery and the like. He built a small sawmill, powered by a steam engine and one year (1938-39) set up his mill in the



Hauser place of business on Wanham's main street.

bush some miles southeast of Belloy. He had a small crew of men working for him there. Among those on the crew were Dave Wiegel, Carl Niebergall, Cliff Stearns. Lizzie

and Clara moved there, with enough furniture (including piano) and supplies to get through the winter, and cooked for the men. The piano provided entertainment on the long winter evenings -- and there was a male quartet consisting of Ben Hauser, Carl Niebergall, Dave Wiegel and Clara (first tenor). That winter Joe again lived in his shop in Wanham, occasionally making visits to the sawmill. Clara's seventeenth birthday, which took place that year, was celebrated by a visit from all her friends and the high-school teacher (Stuart Jones) and his wife; they all came by team and sleigh to spend an afternoon and evening at the mill. A wonderful time was had by all. An extraordinary event took place that winter, Clara recalls -- a total eclipse of the sun, around noon on a bright January day, left the world in complete darkness for a short time.

In 1940, we were one year into World War II. The Great Depression, which had been such a difficult time for everyone, was over, and with the artificial prosperity created by the war, the economic picture at least, was somewhat brighter. The young people of the community were growing up; the girls were launching into careers as wives or teachers or nurses (the choice of career was limited in those days), the boys were in the armed forces. About this time, the Hausers sold the farm and built a house in Wanham -- their property, as many readers will remember, was on what is now the area between the present C.O.C.O. Hall and the Wanham Hotel. (As a matter of fact, the Village Office used to be in Joe Hauser's old shop for a number of years).

By this time, Clara was 18 years of age -- and it was time to go to work. Lizzie gave the matter some thought, and decided that "since Clara was too softhearted to be a nurse, would be no good as a teacher, and showed no signs of getting married", becoming a secretary was the only alternative. And so it was. Somehow, Joe scraped up enough money to pay for the tuition fee at Alberta Business College, plus \$15.00 per month room-and-board (can anyone believe this???) at a hostel, ... and Clara was off and away. In the ensuing years, she worked for a number of years in Edmonton and area -- for the R.C.M.P., the American Army Air Corps, the Canadian Army. And whenever possible, she always returned to spend brief periods visiting her parents and "renewing old acquaintance" in the little town she loved.

Meanwhile the war went on. Young men from the Peace River country were in the forefront of those who volunteered for service and among the first to go overseas. From Wanham and area went Gordon MacDonald, Clifford and Stanley Playdon, Albert and Paul (and later, Lurnie) Leriger, Victor Wiegel, Julien St. Pierre, Sam Kenney, Jim Watson, Bill Laughy, Del Wells, Jock Webster, the Ferguson boys. Occasionally, there would be meetings and dates between young men and women from Wanham, in Edmonton ... strangely enough, "fundates" -- young people did not seem to think about the sadder aspects of war (perhaps because there was no TV with its immediate, factual news-coverage). However, as time passed and the situation worsened, the casualty lists grew -- and many a tear was shed. Stanley Playdon was a prisoner-of-war for years; Gordon MacDonald, an officer in the R.C.A.F., was shot down at least once and



Clara and Bob Johnson on their wedding day.

was reported missing, but eventually returned safely. So it went ... until at last, in 1945, the war was over. The boys who survived came home, most of them straight back to their farms, and took up where they had left off.

Meanwhile, Joe and Lizzie continued to live in their comfortable little house in Wanham. Joe was alone (Ben, after a brief stint in the army, was working in B.C., Clara in Edmonton), carrying the heavy load of handling the oil agency, machine agency, Treasury branch and so on. As it turned out, he was working too hard and eventually after several heart-attacks in early 1947, he was told he would have to stop working altogether. Ben and Clara returned home to take over Joe's business -- but one month after their return, Joe died of a massive coronary. He was only 57 years old.

Ben and Clara continued in the oil business for nearly six years (thus the Hausers were Imperial Oil agents for 25 years). The business expanded considerably during their time, partly due to a small "boom" experienced by Wanham after 1947; the Lassiter Project was underway then, as well as oil exploration. Lizzie continued to live in the Hauser house with Clara ... and Ben eventually surprised everyone by getting married, in 1951, to Freda Wegh. As a matter of fact, everyone seemed to be getting married -- everyone, that is except Clara. She was usually called upon as wedding consultant, church organist, and sometimes even soloist!

Finally, in 1952, Clara decided to leave Wanham and work elsewhere. In 1955, she went to work for Gunnar Mining Limited in northern Saskatchewan -- and there ("At last", as everyone said) she met and became engaged to and married, Robert Johnson. During the eight years in which they lived at Gunnar, Clara and Bob had three children (of whom two are living, Stewart who is now 23, and Liz who is 22). In later years the Johnson family lived in such widely-separated places as Merritt, B.C., Pine Point and Yellowknife, N.W.T., Whitehorse, Yukon and Fort McMurray, Alberta. At the present time (1979) Clara and Bob and Stewart still live in Fort McMurray and Liz in Edmonton. There is one grandson.

Ben and Freda Hauser moved to Chetwynd, B.C., in the mid-1950's, where they have lived for more than 20 years now. They had four children: Janice (who died at the age of 23), Valerie, Richard and Melody. There are three grandchildren.

Lizzie (Mrs. Hauser, Sr.) moved to B.C. in 1963, and lived in Vernon for about ten years. She is now 86 years of age and lives in a nursing-home in Kelowna, B.C. She continues to keep herself constantly occupied by making quilts and cushions, or braiding rugs. Her health is excellent, and she is happy and content, enjoying visits from some of the many other ex-residents of Wanham, who also live in Kelowna.

Although none of the Hausers now live in Wanham, it will always be "home" to them. Joe and the little grandson he never knew, both sleep in the "The Old Cemetery" ... along with so many others who have left us. But nothing is ever lost: the town, the people (even though no longer here), the events that took place, all served to form a part of the fabric that made up our lives, and will never be forgotten.

BEN HAUSER

We got married March 18, 1951, after one of the worst snowstorms anyone could remember. Ben had to hire Joe Spooner and "cat" to snowplow a road all the way to my folk's farm (7 miles south of Wanham) so Ben could drive his tank truck out there to get me. The cat broke down 1/2 mile from my folks and Ben had to walk the last 1/2 to get me and all the baking Mom and I had done for the reception. Ben and I made about 3 trips on foot over the snowdrifts to get everything into the truck. We could look *down* on the truck below us when we walked on the snow piled up on the sides of the road.

WHITE BIBLE AND STREAMERS

Then, on the day of our wedding (2 days later), poor Clara had to play the wedding march over and over while I dressed in Ben's mom's house and waited for my flowers to arrive by train from Edmonton. The train was late and the flowers never came, as they were considered too perishable. Fortunately Nan Hall, next door, had her white Bible with streamers and dried flowers, which she happily lent me and I finally made it to the church, trying to look as dignified as possible, and trying not to notice that the wedding march sounded increasingly louder and madder, and that Clara's lips were beginning to look slightly set. Almost forgot how solemn the occasion was supposed to be.

Winters were longer and colder then with more snow. Ben remembers several incidents where he had to run a car off the road, in the Saddle Hills for instance, which could be a difficult road. The driver of the car would be very annoyed, but got over it when Ben explained he could pull their car out with his truck much easier than they could pull him out if he were run off the road. All the while he was cheerfully hooking up his every-ready chain to pull them out.



Ben, Freda and Clara at Dunvegan in 1952.

We went to Edmonton for a week for our honeymoon (driving in the same old tank truck). Coming back we couldn't find a room anywhere along the way to sleep so slept as best we could on the seat of the truck. Had the motor running off and on, but not steady. I got a real chill, I guess, cause I ended up in Spirit River hospital for a week with acute kidney infection.

We had our kids thick and fast. Everyone teased Ben about making up for lost time. He got married at 37.

Janice was born August 1, 1952, an "A" student all her life. Valerie was born December 28, 1953, married and divorced, has one girl. Rick was born July 15, 1955, married and divorced, has 2 boys. Melody was born October 4, 1956, (properly named as she makes music in a band now).

Our kids remembered their "big sisters" with delight, Maxine and Sharon, Ben's cousins, who stayed with us to attend school one winter. There were no snowplows or school buses in the area in those days and they lived out on the farm at the time. They taught our kids many songs, which 3 year old Janice picked out on the piano with 1 finger all by herself. They were good babysitters too. Their mom brought milk, cottage cheese and other goodies from the farm for everyone's enjoyment.

I suppose Lawrence and Audrey Laughy won't soon forget the home birth of Melody! Neither will Helen Harrington nor Auntie Doda! Nor will Ben! Everyone helped. Lawrence loyally waited out in his car while Audrey assisted inside. By the time Dr. Law arrived from Spirit River, everything was in full control. Mother and baby doing great; Father and the rest a little in shock, I think!

Ben made friends in all 4 directions from Wanham. His oil deliveries spread over a wide area, along the back roads to the Lassiter Project, Belloy, Peoria, Burnt River, and towards Rycroft and Spirit River, Heart Valley, West Vale and Bad Heart, etc.

John Krenzler, who operated a garage and sold gas in Peoria, often dropped in to chat. He lives in Kelowna, right around the corner from Freda's folks', the Wegh's, and still loves to chat to any and all of his old friends.

Sometimes I think the amounts of coffee consumed by John and Ben while hatching great plans would have floated a battleship!

Ben born 1913, September 24, in Neudorf, Saskatchewan - always liked experimenting and inventing, using spools and his mother's treadle sewing machine for his first ideas. Also liked playing in the mud. A trait his children inherited. All four of them, after being bathed and freshly clad, headed for a dandy "muddee-puddle" in front of Wanham's Presbyterian church and got down on their tummys and wallowed like pigs in the mud. They were then led home by the student minister (forget his name) who was grinning broadly and informed their highly embarrassed mom, that he took pictures of the event which he showed later in the evening at the church at some social gathering.



The Ben Hauser family in 1956. Grandma Wegh holding Melody Hauser, her daughter Claudia's girl, Alana, Freda Hauser with daughter, Valerie, Ben Hauser holding son, Ricky, Claudia's son, Mark, in front with Janice Hauser.

KI YIPPY KI

When Rick was 3 years old and was still known as Ricky, he with some other kindergarteners, was sitting at the front of the church while we adults listened to Reverend Moore preach a sermon. Guess the sermon got boring to Ricky and he started staring out the window and humming. Soon he was singing louder and louder "Yippy ki yippy ki yay". His mother, as usual, was too embarrassed to do anything so "Grandpa" Beamer (Harry Sr.) went up and popped a peppermint in his mouth, hoping to quiet him for the rest of the sermon. It worked for a while but about 15 minutes later, he gave us an encore. Freda finally went up and retrieved him and he sat on her lap the rest of the sermon.

Janice and Valerie spent their very first school years in Wanham, enjoying as teachers Ozan McSweeney, Doris Tansem and Grace Sather. Ricky went to playschool but never got to start Grade 1 in Alberta as we moved in September, 1961, to B.C. Melody never had the privilege at all of attending Wanham school.

Living in such a small community, the children were spoiled by all the old bachelors, etc. George Bolduc and Louis Tansem to name only a few (and Mr. Pepper!) would give them a nickel for ice cream whenever they

would walk by our yard on "main street" and Gaspard Bouchard's cafe had a steady stream of wee Hauser patrons at the same time that daddy had a coffee there. (Or else Fimrite's was selling coloring books if they'd had enough ice cream!)

Doting relatives nearby made for pleasant memories, with one grandma and an Auntie Doda and Uncle Art in town. There was a set of grandparents on the farm 7 miles away where they also had many pleasant memories.

Even after years of living in B.C., a trip back to Wanham was referred to as a trip "back home". We enjoyed picking mushrooms and strawberries on Auntie Doda's farm - never found good mushrooms in B.C.! Honest!

We are very proud to have once been a part of Wanham's history and admire the 'true grit' and ambition in those people. For the size of the community, it has accomplished a lot in terms of community spirit etc.

Ben was about 18 when he had that sawmill and hired several local people including Joe, John and Tony Bilinski, some Urnesses, Melnyks, Joe Masurak, Bill Trumpower, etc.

Ben also worked as a journeyman-pipefitter for Imperial Oil for several years - installing oil tanks, above and below ground for bulk agents (also catwalks on the tanks) all over the Peace River Country, Hay River, Hines Creek, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Valleyview, Chetwynd, etc., etc. Now he is semi-retired, working as a guard on call for the R.C.M.P., and Freda works there also as a matron.

Rick, their only son, is as mechanically minded as his father, and usually works at related jobs.

Valerie works in Calgary selling cameras (at Robinsons). Melody was a printer at the Citizen in Chetwynd but is now devoting her time exclusively to music, playing bass guitar in a band.

JOYS AND SORROWS

By the time they moved to British Columbia in September, 1961, they had four children approximately 1 1/2 years apart in age. Needless to say, there were many interesting incidents with surprisingly few fights. There were many joys, trials and tribulations but no more than in any fair-sized family. Unfortunately, one very sad incident to cloud an otherwise happy life; the death of their firstborn, Janice at the age of 23, in December, 1975.

After two years of commuting back and forth to Alberta to settle various affairs, Ben settled into a steady job of working for someone else. Having been self-employed for most of his adult life, that was a new experience. He worked briefly for the PGE (now known as the BCR) then as a custodian at the Windrem Elementary-Secondary school. Then he settled into a security guard job for Canfor. He retired in 1978 and works part-time, on call only, now.

Freda never did "go to work" outside the home in B.C. Raising the four tots, who rapidly became four teenagers, (all at once practically), kept her busy. They

settled on some country property, 10 miles west of Chetwynd, where the children and their pets enjoyed roaming around picking berries, climbing the foothills, down to the Pine River to swim, etc. One of their fondest recollections was driving around the property and access roads on a unique machine Ben built for them known as the "dirt hauler". It looked like a cross between a tractor and dump truck that may have come right from "The Beverly Hill Billies!"

Ben and Freda still live 10 miles west of Chetwynd. Daughter, Valerie Berg, (and her daughter Merlyn) live in Calgary. Son, Rick, lives and works in Chetwynd. Melody lives in Prince George, where Janice had lived and worked for some time before her death. Both girls had also worked at "the News" in Dawson Creek, B.C., prior to moving to Prince George.

One of our great delights is being visited by granddaughter, Merlyn (4) and Rick's two boys, Ricky 5 and Raymond 3.



Halvor and Carrie Hegna.



Ben Hauser's saw mill operation.

THE STORY OF HALVOR AND CAROLINE HEGNA

as told to Lily G. Sather

'America, a place filled with milk and honey - a place where money practically grew on trees, and everyone was rich!'

These were the stories often heard in Europe about the new world and these too, were the enticements to which many a native Viking son responded.

Halvor Hegna was no exception, and at the age of thirty years, he emigrated to Canada. His travelling companions were Sam Ronning and another gentleman, who stopped off in Saskatchewan.

It was 1930 when he arrived in the Peace River country, his first destination being Valhalla Centre, where he had relatives.

While he was working on the railway near Hythe, he met another Scandinavian, Halvor Sveinungaard, who advised him that homestead land was then available in the East Peoria district.

The new emigrant went immediately to the land office, and so it was that during the winter of 1931, he moved on to his own land, S.W. 1/4 26-76-3-6.

The winter was a mild one, with hardly any snow and

very little frost in the ground.

Halvor took advantage of the good weather and began clearing his land, with nothing more than a double-bitted axe and a strong back.

By spring, he had eighteen or twenty acres ready for the breaking plow.

Not having equipment of his own, he hired a neighbor, Mr. Bill Rottacker, who had the needed tractor and plow, to break the sod. Halvor had no money to pay for this service, so compensated for it with return labour.

The following year, wheat and oats were seeded on the acreage, but it was planted a little too late in the season and an early frost came, reducing the yield to only fair. Game on the homestead was plentiful, and so were the bears. Halvor recalls hearing them striking the exterior of his home, in an effort to gain entry so they could devour some of the grain stored in one end of the building.

Fuel was no problem either, because firewood was there for the taking, but in that area it was often green, (not dry) and fires were hard to start and burned slowly.

There were lonely times of course, but Halvor mixed quite freely with the German settlers in the Smokey district. Since there were similarities in the German and Norwegian languages, he made out quite well.

Halvor remembers that in the early years he purchased eggs from Bernard Grauman. He paid fifty cents for a milk pail full, (approximately ten dozen) including delivery.

Halvor baked his own bread, an art he learned from a neighbor. He recalls using both round and square Royal yeast cakes for this. He would set the sponge in the evening. Then covering it well to keep it warm, he would leave it overnight. In the morning he would add the rest of the flour and follow the usual procedure.

He walked or caught a ride to Belloy (11 1/2 miles away) for his mail and a few groceries. He remembers occasionally riding with Morris Rollins, another homesteader, who later sold his land to Halvor and moved to the U.S. The last Halvor heard of Morris, he was reported to be in the Vancouver area.

Church services were rare in the early days and although basically Lutheran, Halvor is, perhaps a product of several denominations. The first Lutheran

pastor he remembers was the Reverend Ellingson. The tiny congregation then met at the Anton Rye home. Prior to that, he attended Pentecostal services that were held at the Hans Sorenson home, and which were usually conducted by Mr. Bjerkseth Sr. Upon occasion, Halvor also joined the Seventh Day Adventists at their worship service.

Halvor bought his first team of horses at an auction sale in Heart Valley in 1936, and he later helped get out logs for the first school built in East Peoria.

On April 13, 1944, Halvor married Carolyn Jackson from Manitou, Manitoba. On the way out to the farm following the honeymoon, the wagon in which they were riding (driven by Arne Sorenson and Johnny Orton) got stuck in the mud on Belloy Hill, near the spring. The newlyweds were forced to walk up the hill to lighten the load.



Halvor and Carrie outside their house in East Peoria.

“It was sleeting; there was lots of mud and the trip seemed endless.” Carrie recalls. “I had to hang on to my hat and keep my collar turned right up in an effort to keep warm. My aunt had been very much against my going to live on a homestead in northern Alberta. In fact she told me bluntly that she thought I was crazy! I must confess that on that trip I did wonder a bit if she hadn’t been right! But once we arrived at our new home, the picture was quite different.”

In 1950, Halvor and Carrie bought a new Studebaker. It was the only car in the immediate area at the time so consequently they were called on many times for ambulance duty.

ORDEAL BY FIRE

There were a variety of cases, including maternity, but the worst trip they remember was the time when Alvin Amundsen was burned, in the house fire at his parents home. He was about eighteen then, and he and his ten year old brother Lloyd were batching, while their parents were visiting relatives at Blackfalds, Alberta. That morning Alvin had been trying to light the fire and by mistake used high test gasoline instead of the coal oil he

intended to use, and the gasoline exploded.

Halvor recalls that on that particular morning he was warming up the ‘Stude’ for a trip to Belloy and was puzzled by a peculiar dull ‘chuck, chuck’ sound he could hear, repeating over and over again. Later he realized that it must have been cans popping in the Amundsen home as it was being razed.

It was while he was outside, that he noticed two horsemen tearing toward him across the field. He saw that one of them was just barely able to hang on. Halvor grabbed him as he fell from his horse. He didn’t recognize the rider at once, but soon realized that it must be Alvin. It was 20 degrees below (Fahrenheit) and he was clad only in an old overcoat. The other rider was Lloyd.

The trip to Spirit River was sheer torture, and later the doctor said that Alvin was lucky to have youth on his side. Had he been older, he would not have survived the ordeal.

In 1966, the Hegas retired from farming. “We moved to Grande Prairie on December 5th, which was our old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Scott’s golden wedding anniversary.” Carrie said. “We miss our old friends of course, but we have made many new ones and we are very happy here.”



Jack Hendricks, one of the early bachelor settlers. Known for his horsemanship.

JACK HENDRIX

by Sam Parlee

I first met Jack in February, 1930. My brother Dave and I had set off after breakfast for a barrel of water from the Downey spring. Like many of the new settlers, Jack occupied the Downey shack until his own cabin became habitable. We knocked on the door and were greeted by a rather pleasant, ‘Come!’ from a deep voiced man.

Dave made the introduction and Jack responded with, “Howdy!” as he looked up from his breakfast of fried

potatoes, "I slep in th'smornin'", he confided in Oklahoman drawl, "an I'd figgered on havin' ma hay home from scross't the Burnt bud I haint."

Dave attempted the consolation that sleeping in could well happen to a lone bachelor, but Jack responded with: "Did ja see what the mice done ta my new hat?". The stetson that hung from the rafter appeared to have seen many a trail ride, and was destined for many more in the twenty years that were to follow, irrespective of what the mice might have done.

Frugal to a fault yet generous too, as one kind man said the other day - "Jack always gave \$5.00 for the Christmas program".

Jack was an exceptional teamster and when he spoke to 'that there Charlie horse' or 'that there Jim' or 'Friday Horse', they each in turn knew that they were to apply themselves with no half-hearted mediocrity.

Jack held with the farm, which he had homesteaded in 1929, for about twenty years, when he joined the Community Farm. His stay was to be short lived in the new venture. He found it difficult to adjust to joint ownership and institutional life. He retired about 1950, and moved into Wanham, where he lived in a little house by himself.

It was Wib Buchanan who related this pleasant anecdote to me, that went like this:

Jack had his four-horse team on the frezno moving dirt when the band on his stetson let go. The "new hat" of the thirties had now grown old, and it was quite evident that a new hat band was needed at once. Jack sat down on the bank, took out his jack knife and with a few deft strokes removed a cuff from his blue overalls. For a wonder, it fitted perfectly. Without a word of comment, Jack got up and took hold of his lines.

I gave the matter no further thought at the time, but years later when Jack was in retirement and living in town, I sat down beside him on the wooden steps of Harrington's Post Office. Jack was lonely now, and eager to exchange a few words with anyone who could take time out for an old man.

As I looked down on his tiny frame, I thought of the many years when I had worked beside this very skillful man - this man who had asked so little from life, compared with what he had been able to give. My eye fell on the band of which Wib had spoken of years before, still there, and would be, until its owner would need a hat no longer.

Jack's own little homestead shanty still stands on its original site, in the farm yard of Wes and Shirley Albert, as a humble reminder of a humble and honest man.

THE TED HENRY STORY

by Sam Parlee

Born in 1909, Ted was the youngest of six brothers who came from Hiawatha, Kansas with their parents to Trochu, Alberta to farm in 1914. In the following year the father homesteaded at Dapp where the family attended school for a time. Ted's mother passed away in 1920 while the family had gone to Missouri. The whole family moved back to Dapp to the homestead the



Ted and Bessie - 1936.



Ted and Bessie - 1937.

following year. Ted's schooling began in Missouri then continued in Dapp and Clyde.

In January 1928 a chap called Francis Campbell and Ted headed for Wembley, riding in an empty boxcar without food or blankets. The weather was bitterly cold and the lads nearly perished. Ted believes that it may have been forty below. At Rycroft they were told in no uncertain terms not to try to board the freight again. They set out to walk due south on what is now No. 2 Highway. By nightfall they arrived at Murray's camp. Joe and Jack Murray operated a tie and logging camp on the Burnt River. The campsite was east of the bridge. The boys ate their first meal in two days and hired on at \$35.00 a month. Ted became a teamster and stayed on for two winters. Francis became homesick and after ten days returned to Dapp.

Ted went to work in the spring for Bert Sales a farmer in the Rycroft District. Bert had acquired a first and second homestead in what later became West Vale. The first one lay south of Kakut Lake now owned by Everett Parlee. This had a small dwelling and fence as cattle had been used to prove it up. Bert advised Ted to homestead near to this place and on November 10, 1928 Ted filed on N.W. 23-76-4-W6th due south of Bert's with the road allowance in between.

There were four men in the land-seeking party at that time along with Ted. There were Tom and Ed Mien and Jack Hendrix also a man named Pete Ruddie. Jack by mutual arrangement cancelled Bert's second homestead which is the place now owned by Wes Albert. Ed homesteaded the place that Alfred Hallock lives on now. Tom filed on the one that ultimately became the Wib Buchannon farm. Ed built a house on his place and broke land on both quarters in the summer of 1929. Pete filed on the place that George Sayle homesteaded on December 13, 1930. Pete never came back and the Mien brothers threw their places up too, even though they had ten acres broken on each place.

Living with Jack for a time in the Joe Downey house, a place that was occupied by many early settlers, Ted helped Ken Munro build a log house and barn for Jack on his newly acquired place.

The loss of his household effects when he occupied Bert's place south of the lake on May 12, 1931 was a



Ted with Pride and Twilight.

heavy blow, only his suitcase, team and wagon were saved. He and John Gulick left the site with their teams while everything burned up.

Working for Bert and homesteading at the same time finally came to an end and Ted began to get some equipment of his own. At first it was Paint and Berry, a flashy team and walking plow. Then Babe came, a beautiful bay mare. Babe and Paint raised him four beautiful colts. At first the drill was a single disk-seven foot, just right for three but could be used with two if you only had two. Later the sulkies came with a rolling colter and a spring seat on which a man could ride. Backsetting became a matter of great delight with the trace chains chiming out their constant melody as the myriads of purple grackles followed the glossy furrows and red-winged blackbirds brought their halleluja choruses from the tree-lined brooks and meadows.

Ted's first tractor was a Model M. John Deere, a sweet little outfit with a mounted plough and a tiller to match. As the acreage increased so the need for larger equipment became necessary. Their first car was a 1927 Chev bought from George Sayle in 1942 when George left for the army. The car cost \$40.00 and served the Henry's for seven years. He later traded it to Ed Tracy on a Pontiac which he didn't keep too long.

FIRST WEDDING AT KNOX

"In the spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love." Ted wooed and won the heart and hand of Bessie the eldest daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. William Davis. They were married in Knox Presbyterian Church in the village of Wanham with the family of the bride and friends and neighbors gathered for the occasion. Albert, brother of the bride was best man. Mary Siemens was bridesmaid with the Rev. Atkinson officiating. This proverbial knot was tied January 4, 1937.

Cecil was born in November, 1937. Stella on April 12, 1944.

Cecil works for the town of High Prairie and has held his position for six years.

Stella married Alex Horoshko in 1962. Alex operated Beaver Lumber at Wanham for five years. At present he is a carpenter at Grande Prairie.

Not all the experiences on the Henry farm were pleasant. Like so many of us Ted learned by trial and error. They lost their hiproofed barn by fire in forty-eight. When the barn burned, the Metheny workshop was purchased and neighbors helped to set it up on the

present site. Earlier a new granary built of logs burned down and still these people carried on and built up a fine herd of Hereford cattle. Mrs. Henry and son Cecil took homesteads which were ultimately developed into splendid places though they were at some distance from the home quarter.

CHICKEN AND THE CHOP

On one occasion Ted had been to Harry Beamer's for a load of chop with Pride and Twilight his beautiful pair of roans, both of which were Paint's colts. He tied up his lines as he entered his farm gate and took a bead on a prairie chicken. The unattended team backed the sleigh over the creek bank and the box landed bottom up and chop down in the gulch below. Ted claims he got the chicken but the chop had to be carried by bucket up the hill. The team and their master became very much attached to one another. They lived to be 27 and 31 years of age.

Ted was in charge of a blue roan Belgian stallion in 1935 for Orm Brian of Woking. Many fine horses were raised in this and adjacent communities including Ted's Pride and Twilight which were the direct descendants of this magnificent horse.

FAITHFUL FANNIE

In the early times Ted was often asked by Mrs. Dan Gulick to take care of the ranch at the head of the lake while she was away from home. Once on his way home Ted met a bear which stood motionless on his hind legs.



The Henry Family. Back Row: Stella and Cecil. Front Row: Bessie and Ted.

Ted whistled for Fanny, Mrs. Gulick's dog. The dog put the bear to flight. So fortunate that this took place not too far from the dwelling.

Mrs. Henry passed away September 23, 1975. Ted is retired and lives in Sexsmith now. He rents his farm to Wes Murphy. He does come out to visit friends. At times he drops in to Bethel Chapel where he has opportunity to renew acquaintances with friends of a lifetime.



The Hertzler family - James, Troy, Faye and Mitchell.

THE JIM HERTZLER FAMILY

submitted by Faye Hertzler

It was July 4th, 1977. The weather this day was beautifully clear and warm. The lights of the vehicle to be towed behind that big U Haul truck had just been put into working order. The Hertzler family stood in a circle holding hands just outside the passenger door of the truck. One of us prayed for God's divine protection on the trip while the rest of us let the farewell tears flow freely. Troy left the group, climbed into the truck, crawled to the opposite window and sobbed uncontrollably. It was 4:00 p.m. on Dad Hertzler's farm in Morgantown, Pennsylvania. Jim and I broke loose from the farewell hugs, hopped into the truck and started that motor heading northwest to Wanham, Alberta, Canada.

The last six months had been a series of unexplainable miracles in our lives and now the Lord was moving us to a new destination, very unfamiliar and with much apprehension. Only the knowledge that His guidance is perfect kept us heading for our destiny.

MORGANTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

This story begins on November 6, 1965 with the marriage of Faye Gehman of Bally, Pennsylvania to James L. Hertzler of Morgantown, Pennsylvania. We newlyweds took up residence in Morgantown where I worked as a Book-keeper secretary for a local feed mill and Jim managed a chicken partnership in an 18,000 cage layer operation with his father. Four years later, Jim bought an ownership in Twin Slope Farmer's Market and he and I built and operated our own Luncheonette stand in that farmer's market. At the same time our church, Twin Valley Bible Chapel, asked Jim to consider the

position of visiting pastor. He accepted and assumed these responsibilities until moving to Wanham in 1977. In 1971, we bought our own five acre farmette in Narvon, Pennsylvania. In June of 1972, Troy was born. We spent the next five years operating our growing luncheonette business, managing the farmer's market and being actively involved with not only the visitation of our church, but all the church activities.

INTRODUCTION TO BETHEL CHAPEL

In December of 1976, as the big plane landed in Grande Prairie airport before daybreak, we for the first time experienced the dawn of a day at 8:30 a.m., and the dry cold of -20C in Northern Alberta. We had taken ten days out of a super busy schedule to come to Canada to visit special friends, the Tom Peachys who were pastoring Grace Gospel Chapel in Spirit River. Faith Peachy is my cousin, and both she and Tom were attendants at our wedding. In 1969, they moved to Canada, graduated from Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, and then went on to pastor the church in Spirit River.

Bethel Chapel in Wanham not having a pastor at the moment, had requested that Jim fill the pulpit on one of the Sundays of our stay.

It was a long lonely eighteen miles that Sunday morning as we headed for Spirit River toward Wanham in a borrowed car in -20 C weather with about six inches of snow on the ground. We found the church at the north end of a rather desolate looking snow covered town. Fred Scriba smiled and waved us inside as he briskly swept the snow from the porch. Once inside, we met the bright bubbly faces of the Scribas', Olsens', Parlees', Neufelds', and Paulovichs'. There was a friendly atmosphere and we couldn't help but love these people. We knew the church had no pastor, but no one can explain the shock and disbelief when these people asked us to consider moving to this cold winter wonderland and to fill the position as pastor and wife of Bethel Chapel. We smilingly promised to pray for God's direction, but inwardly screamed, "Impossible!"

The return trip to Pennsylvania was spent in quietness, pondering over the events of the last ten days and trying to deny an almost unquenchable love we felt for these people. Ironically, just three days before we had boarded the plane to begin our Canadian trip, a local pastor had asked Jim to consider an assistant pastor position in his church, just fifteen miles from our home. We told no one of these events - just prayed. Was God trying to tell us something? Our roots in Pennsylvania were deep. We had mortgages and business debts to pay. Our family and friends lived around us. We were happy here. Surely we weren't to move to Canada and leave all this?

THE ANSWER IN GENESIS, CHAPTER 12

On January 12, 1977, Jim got his answer, just as clear as if it was written in direction form. He had committed himself to read the Bible through that year. This morning he was reading Genesis, Chapter 12 where Abraham was commanded to leave his father's house and his country and go into a land called Canaan. He was to pitch his tent

on the east side of Bethel. As Jim read that chapter the directions were scripturally correct. The word Canaan looked like Canada and he discovered that the church housing lot was on the east side of Bethel Chapel. Jim did not tell me the reason, but quietly asked me to read Genesis, chapter 12 sometime that day. After the house chores were finished, I fulfilled his request and immediately knew that we would be moving to Wanham, Alberta.

There were so many hurdles to cross, but each step proceeded on to the next. We applied for a visa, had the necessary medical examinations, and passed a stiff interview with a Canadian Consultant in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We sold our business and tied up all loose ends concerning it. We reviewed every household article we owned, trying to decide whether to keep it, sell it, or throw it away. We lived through May and June in a transition stage waiting for a promised visa to be stamped and returned by Ottawa. On July 1st, 1977, the envelope containing the mound of papers arrived. On July 2nd and 3rd we loaded our U Haul van making a careful list of article, make, serial number and value to be presented to the border officials in Saskatchewan. On July 4th, we declared our independence from the U.S.A. and headed north to Canada.

For the next week the cab of that truck became our home during most of the day. We witnessed the beautiful scenery of the northeast states and experienced the intense heat of the midwest states. We tried to fill our minds with new things to forget the pain of farewells. Only the promises of a new puppy would stop the tears shed by Troy.

Finally, after hours of yellow Dakota mustard seed fields, we arrived in front of the Canadian border authorities at North Portal where we would then proceed with the title of Landed Immigrants. Only one small problem delayed us. A number on the inside of the driver's door of our 1971 Volks Wagon, which was literally buried under our household possessions in the U Haul, was absolutely necessary before we could enter Canada. At first our only solution to gain access to this number was to unload in the border parking lot. After analysing the situation, Jim found a tiny opening into which he could wedge himself upside down and open the door of the Volks Wagon just far enough to see the number. All papers affirmed and stamped, we headed for Wanham, Alberta. For the first time in our lives we experienced miles of unpopulated country-side; nights with no setting sun, and the loneliness of a foreign country.

WELCOME TO WANHAM

At six p.m. Saturday evening, July 9th, 1977, our caravan halted in front of a newly purchased trailer placed on the lot on the east side of Wanham. Friends from Bethel Chapel gathered to unload the van. The kitchen of our new home filled with the aroma of coffee and chocolate cake as we were introduced to new friends and a new pace of life.

Life in Wanham was a new experience for us. No more could we hear the clapping of horses hooves as they

pulled the Amish buggies down the highway just outside our front door in Pennsylvania. No more did we hear the fast moving tanker trucks shifting gears down this same highway. Now if we listened carefully, we could hear the play and laughter of children in the playground across the way, and the howl of coyotes prowling the outskirts of town, and the drone of the dryers at the alfalfa pellet plant. It was a beautiful, serene setting but quite a shift from the fast-moving, nerve up-setting pace to which we had become accustomed.

We were introduced to higher prices, dug-out water and home butchered chickens. We sat on a chesterfield instead of a sofa and rode in a vehicle instead of a car. We phoned someone on the telephone instead of calling them. We grocery shopped in a tiny local country store instead of a twelve check-out counter supermarket. We drove 60 miles to the nearest shopping centre instead of hopping in the car and arriving in five minutes. We experienced gravel roads, lonely and desolate with no land marks, and we were sure to be forever lost if the car headed in any other direction than north or south of Wanham. We learned to see through cracked windshields and to plug up gas tank leaks. Finally becoming climatized enough to take our parkas off in August, we quickly donned them again when snow fell in October and the temperatures dipped to -50F in November and December. We slowly began to feel a part of Wanham. Old memories began to slip into the background and new experiences replaced them. Baseball and hockey were included in Jim's activities. Taras and Lorraine Putio invited us to try curling for the first time in our lives. People became friendly and familiar. We started to refer to Wanham as home.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR

The Wanham area wild-life became a reality to us, not just some fantastic hunting story of an American hunter being guided on a Northern Canadian hunting expedition. The moose, deer and elk were sights to fulfill a hunter's dream. However, a Sunday afternoon incident with a curious bear at the North Burnt almost made our longings turn once again to the docile cattle hills of Pennsylvania. By this time our family included dual-citizenship ... Mitchell, born in Fairview on May 3, 1979.

In August after a Sunday morning service, we decided to spend the afternoon swimming at the North Burnt. Troy and Jim splashed and swam in the water while I protected the sleeping baby from the many bees in the car. A half-grown black bear was already beside our open windows before any of us saw him. I quickly rolled up each window as he proceeded to jump up and sniff the smells of our tasty human morsels permeating the area around the car. When he could not gain access to the inside, he walked to the water edge, eyed up the pair in the water, but decided to ransack a towel and a pair of pants as a substitute. He dropped the clothes and made a return trip to the car. I trembled to think that I had almost left Mitchell in the car to sleep by himself, as I had wanted to walk to the water's edge and watch the swimming. The bear sniffed the car once more, tore a chrome strip from the side and then rested on his

haunches by the back bumper. I started the motor and blew the horn. He ran just far enough away for Jim and Troy to swim across the river, grab their clothes and hop into the waiting car. We headed for the protection of Wanham, vowing never to go swimming alone again in a country where the feeling of being completely alone in a terrifying situation was almost as dominant as the incident itself.

HIGHLIGHTS OF A BUSY PASTOR'S LIFE

Our summers have been highlighted by activities associated with Bethel Chapel. We spent the months of July working with children and teens at David Thompson Bible Camp near Hines Creek. Here we were introduced to plywood bunk cabins, mosquitoes and creek dish water. It is very different from the plush rug-floor motel type camp cabins in Pennsylvania. However, the atmosphere has a spiritual-based nostalgia that brings us back to the primitive setting each year ... the good food - the hot dog roasts - the sports events - the friendly people - the silly teen skits - the excellent speakers - and the sound of the children singing make July a memorable month.

Our association with Bethel Chapel will be dominant in our minds forever. We came to Wanham knowing we were not fit or capable to assume all the responsibilities of the church ministry. We were merely available and expected God to fill in the rest. The people have loved us in spite of our weaknesses. Jim takes charge of Sunday services and Wednesday evening Bible Studies. We have all participated in Daily Vacation Bible School, Christmas programs and Easter programs. Many hours are spent visiting and sharing over a steaming cup of coffee.

We have found our community warm, friendly and hospitable. We have not been treated as foreigners, but as active members of this community, becoming even more active as Jim participates on the sports teams and as I assume the responsibilities as treasurer of C.O.C.O. Troy lives from one season to the next by playing baseball at the sports' grounds during the summer, but barely able to wait for ice skating during the winter. As the strings of light bulbs above the skating rink switched on, Troy would be charging out of doors carrying his skates by the blades, dragging the laces through the snow. If for some reason the lights did not switch on, he and a few other impatient friends would often be seen zipping around the streets, skating on the icy surface. This year will hold some new memories. He will be skating and playing hockey at the new curling and skating arena complex at the south end of town instead of worrying if his ears will freeze on the open air rink at the north end of town.

At the time of this writing, we have lived in Wanham three and a half years. They have been some of the best years of our lives. Jim has had the privilege of assisting the sports activities at the Wanham School by coaching the girls' basketball team in 1980. He worked with seven return players and three new players. The wins outnumbered the losses during the season and the girls won the zone play-off tournament. This made them eligible to

participate in the Provincial championship tournament. We escorted them to Stirling, Alberta in March. After losing the first game and winning the second, the girls lost the consolation trophy by two points in the breath-taking third game. The tears flowed freely after that game and Jim's only comment was,

"How can you comfort ten crying girls when all you want to do is cry yourself?"

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

On the sports scene we also managed an almost uncomprehendable feat this last October. Our beloved Philadelphia Phillies had won the pennant and would be playing the World Series. We had always hoped that some day we would be able to see a World Series in Philadelphia. In 1980 it was happening, and we were 3000 miles from the action! Our Wanham friends made it almost seem like home as their enthusiasm grew along with ours over each win. After the last pitch, making a World Series championship for the Phillies a reality, our homesickness was cancelled by the congratulatory remarks of Wanham people, who seemed to match our excitement over the victory.

Our three and one half years in Wanham hold cherished memories of areas that our U.S. friends have never seen. We do not freeze up or live in igloos as many imagine. We do enjoy the hot Alberta sun in the summer, and the dry cold temperatures during the winter. No one can really describe the high open skies dotted with bright stars or dancing with colored lights. Just a few months later, this same sky is reddened by a midnight setting sun. Our U.S. friends cannot imagine the beauty of a rape field in full blossom, or the winter wonderland caused by a heavy hoar frost. They never feel the temperature change of a warm western chinook. They do not understand that school is not cancelled because of snow, but only when the temperature drops to -40 degrees F. They don't understand our road signs which say kilometers instead of miles. They weigh and measure themselves in pounds and inches where we must convert to grams and centimeters. They sell grain by the bushel where we sell grain by the tonnes.

We are glad that the Lord showed us Genesis, chapter 12 and used it as a means to move us to Wanham. Our actual Wanham history is thus far only a few short years, but our lasting friendships and cherished memories could be spread into a lifetime.

James L. Hertzler ... Faye Hertzler ... Troy M. Hertzler ... Mitchell T. Hertzler ...

MURIEL HILL (GRANT)

I arrived in Wanham, May, 1937, where I remained until December, 1939. I left to be married but later found myself in Lomond in southern Alberta where I lived for 10 months.

I was told that there were 73 people in the town but there was a large area settled around Wanham, which I



Muriel Grant (Hill).

LOUIS WILLIAM HOEGHT

by Onagh Hoeght

Louis Hoeght was originally from Denmark, coming to Canada when he was twelve years old. He came to Wanham in 1933 from Arrowhead, Alberta, to assist in the U.G.G. elevator. He was second man to Dave Moore, who was ill. When Dave died, Louis was appointed as U.G.G. agent. He met Onagh Harrington, and they were married, in December, 1935.



Louis and Onagh at Wanham in 1930.

found to be true.

I found Wanham a very beautiful country as is the country around, but wasn't very fond of the mud.

The nurses residence was up on a little hill overlooking the town. I could see Fairview at night.

Calgary was my home, where I went to school and graduated as a nurse.

On the corner of the nurses lot was a well of very good water, where many people stopped.

My neighbors were the Art Ramsfields. Art delivered water to the town. Mrs. Ramsfield's family were the Camerons who lived up the road. One of the boys liked to play jokes. I think it was Tom. One day he put an air cushion on a chair and was very anxious that I sit there. You know the result.

Eli Barrett, an elderly bachelor, was a good chaperon, liked the radio and would bring a shirt he had washed for me to iron when there was a "do" in town.

Mr. Sawers helped me with my wood and brought me my mail.

The Bryndzaks cow got loose one day and wandered into J.J. Harrington's yard. She butted Mrs. Harrington causing her to fall in the mud.

These families were my immediate neighbors but I felt everyone was. Everyone was very good to me and I especially remember the kindness of Mrs. Helen Harrington.

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church visited one day when he was visiting the area. He was perturbed that I had brandy and whisky in my house. I had to assure him it was for medical use only.

The president of the C.G.I.T. group (Bluebird) was Clara Hauser; vice president, Claudia Wegh; secretary treasurer, Frieda Kandt. The leaders were Monthelene Cameron and myself. This was the first C.G.I.T. group in Wanham.

I was married in 1940 to Mervyn Hill who died in 1965. There is a son, Kenneth, and a daughter, Nancy. Mervyn Hill was a brother to Elmer Hill who had the mercantile store.

ELEVATOR HONEYMOON

For the first eight or nine months they lived in the bachelor quarters in the elevator ... the first honeymoon ever spent in a country elevator. Louis used to say it was the cleanest elevator in existence. They lived in Wanham until 1942, having started their family - Joan and Jim. Onagh and Louis were very active in community affairs, and Louis will long be remembered as being an expert banjo player. They took part in plays, of which R. Sawers was director. Both sang in the community choir, directed by Reverend Clow, minister of the Presbyterian Church. One of the highlights of the choir activities was a presentation over C.F.G.P. radio station.

From Wanham, Louis was transferred to Holden, Alberta, and from there to Red Deer, where their third child, David was born.

Louis left the U.G.G. in 1948 and moved to Olds, where he operated a feed mill for nine years. The Hoeghts then moved to Calgary and after residing there for 14 years, Louis passed away at the age of 62, in March, 1971.

Onagh joined the Order of the Royal Purple in Red Deer, and became head of the order for Canada in 1955. She stayed active, and became secretary-treasurer of the Order, at which time the head office was moved to Calgary. She retired after 10 years of service, and still resides in Calgary.



THE HOWARDS

by Jim Howard

My Mother and Dad were married in New Westminster in the fall of 1926. Their first business venture was buying fruit and selling it door to door in Vancouver Chinatown.

I was born in July, 1927, and in 1929, after reading rave notices about the Peace River District, they decided that was for them.

Upon arriving in Edmonton, they were advised to go to the Immigration Hall in Spirit River. It was here they met Elmer Bodette and Chris Bankhead, who told Dad of all the open land north of Belloy.

Dad often laughed about that, as he said the only open land there was between the stumps.

After having dinner at Mrs. Rouleau's restaurant, he went out to look at the land he had filed on. It was in the early spring and the snow was just going. He was delighted to see a little creek running through his land. He figured this was a dream come true. Here, he decided, he would build his first home! Arriving back in Belloy, he was told there had been a mistake, that land had already been taken by a Mr. Nelson. However, he later found out that Mr. Nelson had abandoned it so the land was his.

We moved to Belloy then and lived in the old Jim Bodette house about a half a mile south of town for a while. Mom and Dad, carrying me, walked from there out to our land every weekend to do some clearing and by June, they had chopped, grubbed and dug up a spot to put in a good sized garden. This was in 1929.

Dad was working on the railroad for Cecil Bice, who was section foreman at Belloy at that time. In his "spare time" (very little, working on his job about ten hours a day) he would walk out to the homestead and cut down some trees on all that "open land" he had been told about. One the weekends, Mom would help him.

We had moved from the Bodette house to the railroad bunk house and it was here my sister, Alice, was born on October 7, 1929. Dad went to Wanham on a jigger to get the District Nurse. A jigger? Well, a jigger is something like a motorcycle with a side car on it. But, of course, it ran on the railroad. The nurse had to ride on the side car. Not a very comfortable ride, I'm afraid. But those District Nurses could take anything in their stride.

Sam Rouleau worked with Dad for Cecil Bice for about two years at Belloy when the railroad decided to cut down to two men. This meant that either Sam or Dad had to move. Since Dad had land and a family here, and Sam didn't, Sam said he would move. At that time, he didn't really want to go since his mother and brothers and sisters were all at Belloy. But, in the end, it was the best thing he ever did as, because of that move, he later became roadmaster. He really did well on the railroad.

In 1930 or 31, Cecile Bice quit the railroad and Bill Ripley took over as section foreman.

Dad also worked with Bill and Mike Manzulenko on the section. How those men could work!

By this time, Mom, Dad, Alice and I were living on our homestead. Dad bought a small house from "The Swedes." I'm sorry I don't know their names. Dad always called them that. They were a couple of Swedish boys who, after completing this nice little house, decided



Standing, Left to Right: Steve Howard, Ken Waters, Alice Howard, May Howard, Jack Howard, Grandad Howard, Sergie Raskauskus. Kneeling: John McCormick.



Mrs. Elsie Howard and the caboose.



Howard's Homestead Shack.



Steve Howard's Farm Home.

homesteading was not for them. They had done a beautiful job building the little 10' by 12' house. The logs were all hewn and they had chinked it with moss - not mud as so many people did. Dad was really happy to get it as he was no carpenter.

So, in the fall of 1929, he moved the house to our place and located it close to his little "dream come true" creek. He, of course, dug a cellar under it where the vegetables could be stored.

That spring, after a winter of heavy snow, we woke up one morning to find water on our floor. Looking out we could see our house was completely surrounded by water. Our little creek had risen during the night and was now a good-sized stream. The next thing we noticed was our potatoes and the other vegetables we had left in the cellar, merrily sailing down Dad's "dream come true" creek. It seems funny now but at that time it wasn't very funny. Those potatoes had been grown from potato peelings. You couldn't buy potatoes in those days.

Dad worked on the section for around four years, I think, then he got a job as a pumpman. This job he kept until either 1944 or 45 at \$15 a month.

In 1939, Dad went out to join up. He was gone three days - they wouldn't take him because he had three children by this time. Jack had been born in August of 1937. The law saying the services wouldn't take any man with more than two children had been passed only two days before he applied. He was terribly disappointed, I remember.

By this time we had quite a bit of land cleared. Dad couldn't do too much of it since he was working on the railroad, then on the water tank. But, in 1931 (I believe it was) Fred Kozeluk and John and Justin Sinkevich asked if they could brush land for him. They had just come into the District and needed money badly. First they cleared around the house, then went to work on a couple of knolls across the creek, about 15 acres in all, I believe.

DROWNING RATS

This was in the spring and, of course, the creek was really high so it had to be crossed on a raft.

On this particular day, Mom rode the raft over to where the men were working, gave them the rope connected back so they could cross the creek.

Mom warned them that it was a two-man raft, so not to come over all at one time. Naturally, they decided that Mom was just being over-cautious, so they all climbed on at once. They discovered, too late, that she was right. The raft sank and they all landed in that cold, cold water.

I can still see those three scrambling for the bank like a bunch of drowning rats and a few minutes later, seeing their clothes hung all over the willow trees on the knoll. When their clothes had dried a bit, they came over on the raft, two by two.

Once they finished brushing, Mom and Dad began the hard job of getting the roots out so they could start breaking the land. The smaller roots were dug up with grub hoes. The larger ones were pulled out by wrapping a chain around them and fastening the other end to the double tree to which was hitched our team of horses, Doll and Lady. How those old girls could pull! That done, the

breaking started. A walking plough, the folks had bought in B.C., was shipped to them by their folks and that was what they used to break up that 15 acres. Pulled, of course, by Doll and Lady. That plough still sits in my yard - a reminder of how hard my folks worked in the so called "good old days."

Besides our horses, Dad had bought a cow, "Roanie," from Walt Francis - a really good milk cow. I think all of us kids learned to milk on her. But she came to a sad end - she got stuck in the creek. We pulled her out by she died anyway. That creek! Maybe Dad should have called it his "nightmare" creek!

Things were really tough in those days. If Dad hadn't had his job, I don't know how we could have managed. We didn't have any machinery except for our plough so that meant hiring people to seed and harvest what little crop we did have.



Shannon Log Home - 1945. Back Row, Left to Right: Elsie Howard, Steve Howard, Pat Shannon, Mary Shannon, Alice Howard, Nick Kostash. Front Row: May Howard, Jack Howard, Archie, Guy, Allen and Dennis Shannon.

I remember a man by the name of Al Millar living just west of us. Al lived on moose meat and nothing else. He was on "welfare." One month he'd buy some flour and the next month some sugar and tea. I think they got about \$5 a month - maybe not even that much. In the three or four years he was there, he killed 35 moose.

To make a few dollars to buy clothes, he used to go out trapping muskrats. He came home from one of these excursions with a toothache. Of course, he had no money to go to a dentist, so he persuaded his wife to pull the aching tooth. He went out hunting again the next day and got infection in his gums. He darned near died and probably would have if he hadn't gotten to a doctor in Spirit River. He was laid up for about six weeks while his wife dropped medicine twice a day into a tube the doctor inserted into a hole he had had to drill into his chin. You can imagine how his face was swollen. What misery the poor man suffered because of not having any money.

WHERE'S MIKE?

We had another neighbour, Mike Kelly, that moved in, in 1931, a little bow-legged Irishman about five feet tall,

65 years old and full of life. He was one of the finest people I have ever known. He was a grandfather to us kids. When the folks went to town, us kids used to stay with him in his tin shack. How we loved that! Boy! Could he ever make bannock!

I remember one time Mike disappeared. A neighbour, Henry Ferguson, had come to visit him and he wasn't home. Henry went to some of Mike's closest neighbours and no one had seen him. Then he came to Belloy, where Dad was working, to see if Dad had seen Mike. Dad had seen him that morning at 5:00 a.m. when Dad went to work. He was getting a pail of water from the creek.

When Mike didn't turn up the next day, someone called the Police. For three days the Police and all his neighbours searched for him. On the fourth day, Mike showed up at Bankheads.

Someone had told him there was gold to be found on the Burnt River. He believed them and had gone prospecting without telling anyone. The funny part of it was, he was really mad at us. He thought we had called the Police. We hadn't, but it was the right thing to do. The Police and his neighbours weren't too happy with him either for not letting anyone know where he was going.



Back Row: Jack, May and Alice Howard. Front Row: Sonny, Gloria, Hazel and Beverly Morrell.

About a year later, Mike fell in his shack, hitting his head on the door of his stove, and was never quite the same after that - a bit wobbly on his feet.

In 1944, at 82 years, he decided he was going to go to a show in Wanham. It was a war picture and he really wanted to see it. He said he'd walk into Belloy and take the train into Wanham. The Urness boys, Alvin and Sanford, said they would pick him up in their car after the show and take him home. But Mike didn't make it. Nine days later, the Police found his body in Fred Kozeluk's dam. To get from his place to Belloy, he had to walk a log over the creek. He must have fallen off. Doug Banting, who still lives in Spirit River, was one of the Police that helped in the search.

We really missed old Mike; he was a good friend and

neighbour.

When I think back, Dad really worked hard. Besides clearing and brushing land on our place and looking after the Pump House, he helped clear land for the Belloy townsite. He and Gordon Bice, with axes, grub hoes and dynamite, cleared lots of land there. I think they got paid a dollar a day.

But, even with all his work, times were hard. We were lucky we had a grandmother - Mom's Mom - who lived in B.C. and used to make all us kid's clothes. Remember the short pants boys wore in those days until they were about 14 years old? Well, she made us boys those! How we hated them! To this day, I hate shorts.

We used to always wear gum boots, summer and winter. I'll always remember the first running shoes I ever had. Boy! That was really something!

Us kids worked too. I remember the year I was 10. Alice and I cut all the hay. I cut it with a mower and a team of horses, Alice raked it. She was only eight but sure knew how to drive a team. Dad would stack it right in the field. He'd haul it in in the winter as the stock needed it. I remember Alice and I each got a Roger's water pistol for our work.

I think it was about that time that Mother got her first sewing machine. Ivor Pearson, who was section foreman at that time in Belloy, was going out to Edmonton. Dad asked him if he'd look around for a sewing machine while he was there. It would have to be pretty cheap though, Dad said, as he couldn't afford more than \$25.00.

Ivor, being a bachelor at that time, didn't know too much about sewing machines but he didn't like the Singers - he thought they were too noisy. He found one called the Jones machine, made in England. After much haggling (the store was asking \$40.00 and said they couldn't possibly sell it for \$25.00), he bought it for \$25.00. He hadn't been out from Sweden long at that time. His accent was probably driving them crazy so I guess they let him have it just to get rid of him.

That was the only machine Mom ever had. Jack and Joyce have it now. Boy! Mom did lots of sewing on that machine.

School was a real problem for us kids too. We had to walk 2 1/2 miles to the Kozeluk place - that was where the first Belloy School was located. I didn't start school until I was 10. Then I only went for five years because in the spring you couldn't get out of our place because of high water and in the fall I had to help with the harvest.

Dad used to work on Carl Hansen's threshing outfit every fall and then pump water at night so I had to help Mom at home with the chores.

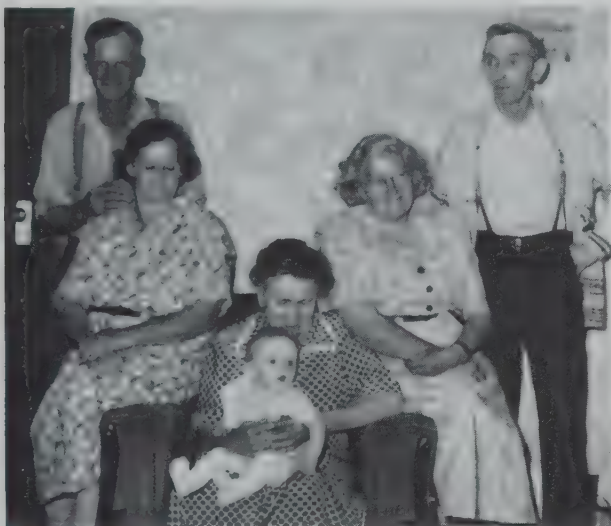
In 1940, Dad bought his first new binder, a Case, from Alan Archibald, who was the Case dealer in Belloy at that time. After cutting our crop and to help pay for the binder, Dad took on some custom work. His first job was for George Bolduc. That crop of wheat went 43 bushels to the acre. After about the third round, George decided he'd need someone to help him stook. I told Dad I'd run the binder and he could help George. I don't think Dad was too happy about that arrangement as I was only 13 then, but it worked pretty good.

One night Dad had to go and pump, then home to help Mom with chores. I was left alone to sleep in an old shack



Jim and Mona Howard's Wedding. Left to Right: Steve Howard, Elsie Howard, Jim Howard, Mona Howard, Alice Howard, Roa Kent, Ben Kent, Henry Kent.

on George's place - my first night away from home alone. That was bad enough but during the night a bad wind came up. That old shack began to shake and rattle. Every minute I thought it was going to blow away with me in it. Boy! Was I ever scared! During the day, driving that team of horses on the binder, I felt like a real man. That night I felt like a little boy wanting his mother.



Left to Right: Henry Kent, Steve Howard, Roa Kent, Elsie Howard, Lucy Purdey (great grandmother), Baby Harold Howard.

After finishing at George's, we went back to our place to cut Mike Kelly's fields which we had rented. It is hard to explain how we had to farm in those days - we only farmed the hills. All the low land was covered with water. There wasn't any road either so you had to wait till the creeks went down before you went from one hill to the other. Today, all the water has gone and the low land grows much better crops than the hills.

I remember the first time I saw Harry and Nellie Scott. They were haying - cutting just as close to the sloughs as possible. Then, after each round, they would carry the hay by the forkfull up to dry ground on the hill. Time after time, they would repeat this operation, wade in water to pick the hay up. What back-breaking work, especially for a woman. But they had cattle and they had

to have hay for the winter. That was in the '30's, about '35, I think.

In 1942 a bad fire went through the Belloy District. It started south of Belloy on the place Ed Pierog has now and moved south to where the Scotts lived then. Here it jumped the road onto the Fred Lewis, Sr. place where it did its worst. It burned them out completely, even their livestock burned to death. It was awful! It could have been worse had Fred not kept his head. He had two boys, one of his own sons and Johnny Kostash, helping him fight the fire. He suddenly realized that they had to get out of there or they, too, would burn to death. Directing the two boys to follow him, he ran to a piece of summer fallow. There, with their coats covering their heads, they lay face down in a furrow. The smoke was so intense



Back Row, Left to Right: Ken, Fred, Clara, Harold, Henry. Front Row: Connie, Tom, Don, Neil.

that, had they tried to stand up, they would have choked to death.

In '43, another fire went through north of us and it was so dry that year that dozens of ground fires were burning even when winter came. Unless you have gone through a bush fire, you can't realize what damage it can do. I don't mean just what it does to man, but what it does to wildlife.

After the 1943 fire, hundreds of carcasses were found. Deer, moose and small animals such as rabbits, squirrels and so on were seen running from the burning bush. I'm



The Ken Idler Family. Left to Right: Ken, Duane, Glen, May and Dennis.

sure I shot hundreds of rabbits just to put them out of their misery.

I guess we were pretty lucky as we never lost too much by fire. That is unless you want to count the hundreds of hours I spent on our Hart Parr tractor plowing fire guards. I guess I especially wanted to save our house, which was, by this time much larger than the original little shack Dad had bought, thanks to our Mother. For it was she who peeled the logs that Dad had cut down the previous winter, skidded them from the bush with a horse called "Brownie," notched them and had them ready to put up each night when Dad came home from work. That was in about 33 or 34.

In 1936 or 37, Henry Ferguson began building a house near our place. But, after getting the walls up, he decided he didn't have money to finish it and, besides that, he wanted to move back to Rycroft. So, Dad bought that and he and John Kropalnicki took it down and moved it to our place. That, too, was added to the original house.

In 1971, Allan Scott and Bill Aley moved that house to our place as Mother had given it to us before she died. We added it on to our house and both Mona and I like our home.

In about 1931 or 32, Mother decided to grow cabbage for sale. Dad built her a hot house and every year she



Steve Howard on jigger beside Belloy water tower.

used to grow about 2000 cabbages. They sold at 5¢ a head. To make sure they grew well, we had to water the plants almost every night. Boy! The pails of water we had to carry up from the creek.

I remember when we were kids, we used to take Maude Archibald, who ran the store in Belloy, lettuce from Mom's garden. She would give us candy for it. Boy! The candy we kids ate. It's a wonder we aren't all toothless!

Those were the days when wild fruit grew in abundance here. I remember Sergie Sinkevich picking wild raspberries and taking them to the store in exchange for 22 shells. With these he could shoot partridges, thus putting meat on the table.

In about 41 or 42, Ross Archibald made a deal with some fox farms for rabbits to feed their fox. Ross paid 4¢ apiece for them. I'm not sure how many box car loads of frozen rabbits he shipped that winter, but it must have been 8 or 10. I remember after school, Alice used to look after Jack and me and Mom would go out with Dad to shoot rabbits. An amazing woman was our mother.

To go back just a bit, I remember something that may be of interest. The year we came here must have been a dry year as I remember Gib Bice and I used to play in the C.P.R. dam in Belloy. It was absolutely dry. That summer (1929) Sam Rouleau was hired by the railroad to dig ditches to the dam so that any rain that did fall would be diverted to that dry hole. On September 9th of that year, it snowed two full feet and Mom says that in two hours the dam was full. It has never been dry since. Maybe I should explain why that dam was so important to the railway. Those were the days of the steam locomotives and, of course, they needed water to supply the steam. The water was pumped from the dam up into a large water tank, then into the boiler on the locomotive's engine. This was the job I mentioned my Dad had for many years.

I just found some records the other day of another job my Dad had the first year we came here. He, Dave Fortier and Gordon Bice did a lot of clearing for the townsite of Belloy. According to the records, they were paid 30¢ an hour - top wages in those days.

I mentioned what a dry year it must have been in 1928. Now I will tell you about a wet year in 1935. It was in July of that year that Ross Archibald jumped off the steps of the Post Office and went swimming on Belloy's main street. Except for a scratch on his stomach from a stump, I guess he had an enjoyable swim.

Here is a little story that will show you what things sold for in the thirties. A Mr. Byrd came into town with five shipping hogs weighing about 250 pounds each, intending to ship them out to Edmonton. Well, meat was pretty scarce those days, so Dad asked him how much he wanted for them. Mr. Byrd told Dad that if he shipped them, he would get about \$5.00 apiece so he'd sell them for that. Dad went over to the store and borrowed \$25.00 from Maude Archibald and bought the pigs.

He and Bill Ripley butchered them and sold some of the meat. Dad said he sold the first two pigs for enough that the other three only cost him \$5.00. Imagine, if you can, getting 750 pounds of pork for \$5.00. Looking at it from the other way, imagine a farmer today selling a shipping pig for \$5.00.

I think the men and women who homesteaded this country must have been real optimists for no matter how tough things were, they carried on.

CAN'T GET ANY WORSE

It was in the spring and Dad traded a big steer he had to Wilbur Sirling for a heifer about to calf. He wanted her for a milk cow. They had a hard time getting her home from Stirling's as she was not broke to lead. Whether that was the reason or not, about a week later she calved ahead of time and both she and the calf died. In the pen next to the one they were in was another young calf. That thing stuck its head through the fence and broke its neck.

Joe Kropalnicki was working for us at that time and he took our team home for a couple of days and I guess he fed them some rotten slough hay. Anyway, the day after he brought them back, the younger horse up and died on us. That was four animals that died in two weeks and what did Dad say? I quote, "Oh, well, things can't go



*Lard Pail Lunch
Pails - Alice and
Jim Howard.*

anywhere but better." He was right, of course, as things did begin to improve as the years went by but who but a real optimist could take that attitude at a time like that?



Mona and Chester Kent.

Our first crops were threshed by Mr. Melnyk with a hand-fed threshing machine. It was always done after freeze-up as the machine had to be moved on skids. I remember they used to have to build a bonfire under the tractor to warm it up. Then they would crank and crank until they finally got it started. Then they would thresh all day. It must have been a very slow process as I remember they used to be there for many days and between Mike Kelly and us we only had about 15 or 20 acres in crop. Carl Hansen threshed for us a few years too.

Then in 1947, Mr. Melnyk bought a brand new threshing machine with a feeder attachment and he threshed for us that year and in 1948. Then we bought our own threshing machine.

The second piece of machinery we bought was a seed drill from Gilmours. It was a fourteen run (about seven or eight feet was all it covered) pulled by three horses. I found some old bills of Dad's and it seems he paid \$70.00 for that drill.

Next he bought a hay rake from Alex Sandercock, a machine dealer in Wanham. He paid \$45.00 for that. A mower from Mr. Ferguson, I believe cost Dad \$70.00.

In some of Dad's papers I found a time sheet (I think that's what you'd call it). It tells how many hours he worked at a job and how much he made for it. This was in 1929 and for 93 hours of work, he made \$27.90. In

other words, 30¢ an hour.

I have a list that Dad made, dated 1931, entitled, "Paid Out." It reads: May-stove, \$40.00; Cultivator, \$9.40; five rolls of wire (I presume this was barbed wire), \$4.30 a roll - \$21.50; staples, 80¢; 1 barrel, \$3.00; gas for breaking, \$14.70; Bankhead for breaking, \$13.00. I imagine Dad had to provide the gas to Bankhead for the breaking. I do not even know how much breaking was done by Chris Bankhead. The list continues: colt from Ferguson, \$4.00; colts from Cecil Bice, \$40.00; Rolson grain, \$2.00.

Another list I found was for groceries bought in August, 1929: 1 dozen eggs, 30¢; 1 can tobacco, 85¢; 1 pound butter, 35¢; 1 package cigarettes, 15¢; 2 packages of matches, 25¢; (this would be the large packages)

I see, too, where the folks sold milk to the restaurant and for 11 quarts, they got \$2.30. Some of the other things they bought were: a cow from Walt Francis for \$65.00, another cow, the same year I guess, for \$10.00, a washing machine for \$18.00, 1 horse for \$20.00, one for \$30.00 and one for \$40.00.

All this is written down very carefully month by month but nowhere does it mention the year. I'll just mention three more pieces of machinery that they bought so you will get some idea of the prices those days and now: a sulky plough for \$15.00, harrows for \$9.00 and a disc for \$12.00.

In 1947, we bought our first car, a 1929 Pontiac, from Orist Melnyk. That was a good vehicle - we used it for years and years.

In 1954, our Dad got double pneumonia. From then on his health really failed. He had frozen his lungs while working at the pumpman job so I guess this left his lungs pretty weak. He passed away in 1963 and in 1971 we lost our mother.

In 1958, Mona and I got married. In 1959, we had our first son. Now we have six boys and one girl. Harold, Henry, Fred, Clara, Neil, Tom and Kenny.

My sister, Alice, married Pete Noga in October, 1959, and has two daughters, Susan and Barbara. Pete died in 1965 and Alice is now married to Don Berner.

My younger sister, Mae, married Ken Idler in December, 1959. They have four boys: Glen, Dwayne, Dennis and Evan and an adopted daughter, Digit.

Brother Jack married Joyce Franks in 1966. They have four children: Connie, Donnie, Dannie and Ronnie.

There is something I would like to add to this story; something I just neglected to mention before.

In 1956 Dad went back to England to try to locate his family. Upon the break-up of his family, he, his sister and two brothers, were put in a convent or orphanage. Dad was two at that time. He had never seen any of his family after that. His health was poor so I guess he felt it was time to go.

His mission was partially successful as he found his sister. His older brother had been killed in the 1914-1918 war and he was unable to find his other brother. His health really improved while he was over there, probably because he quit smoking. However, as soon as he got back home, his health began to fail. He stayed in England for six months. Maybe had he stayed a year his life might have been extended.



Birthday Fun. Back Row, Left to Right: Henry Howard, LaVerne Keller, Harold Howard, Susan Berner, Glen Idler, Duane Idler, Grannie Howard, Barbara Berner, Neil. Front Row: Don Keller, Clara Howard, Dennis Idler, Fred Howard, Evan Idler.



Back Row, Left to Right: Harold and Henry. Front Row: Fred and Clara.



Harold and Doreen Howard.



Harold and Doreen Howard with baby Jonathan.



The Short Horse. Left to Right: Jack Howard, Jane Boss, Earl Boss Jr., Gary Cooper, Sonny Cooper, May Howard, Nora Boss.



Lloyd and Wanda Fowler's ranch house on the Burnt north of Belloy.



Left to Right: John Krenzler, Willard Bjorgan, Arnie Jacobsen.



Eugene Lipinski, Ted Lipinski, John Christensen, Dennis Bush.



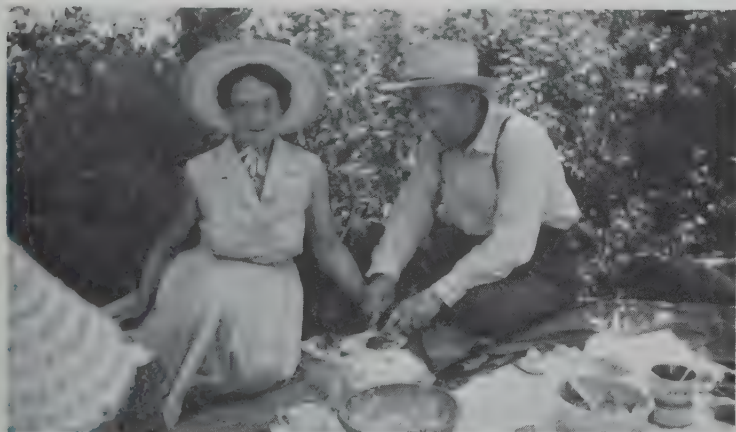
Bill and Gloria Feniak on their wedding day.



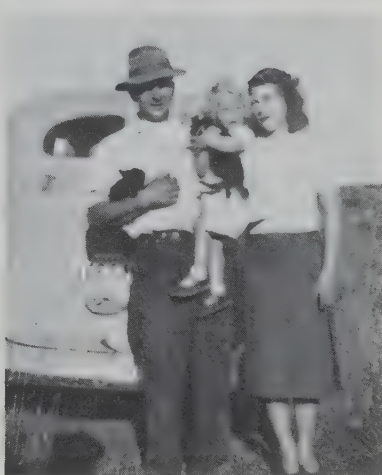
Annie and Elmer Giles in front of their homestead shack.



Above: Jack and Joyce Howard's Wedding. Left to Right: Beth Panko, Joyce, Jack and Dennis Shannon.



Ethel and Fred Lewis - 1959.



Florian, Margie and Wilma Baranec - 1950.



The Cathcart Family. Left to Right: Bill, Mrs. Cathcart, Anna, George. Front Row: David.



Peter Rabbit Operetta by Ozan McSweeney. Left to Right: Sharon Quamme, Beverley Fowler, Annette Prevost, Roger Gerard, Dennis Sather and Alex Posty.



Left to Right: Maggie Ungstad, Audrey Weldon, Carlo, Mrs. Jacobsen holding Melvin, Lillian, Doris Williams, Arnie Jacobsen.

JACOBSEN HISTORY

by Lillian Gosselin

Neils Martin Ancher Jacobsen was born July 16, 1903, in Randus, Denmark. He immigrated to the Peace River country in the fall of 1928. Neils and his step-brother, Martin Bode, shared a homestead cabin south of Wanham.

In the spring of 1930, Sara Pedersen, born December 27, 1903, in Moborg, Denmark, who had sailed on the same ship and time as Neils, came to Wanham from Regina where she had been head cook at a Children's Orphanage and Care Home. On October 30, 1931, Neils and Sara were married in Grande Prairie.

My parents owned the first restaurant in Wanham.

Neils and Sara had four children: Carlo Evan born September 27, 1932. He married Sylvia Listhoeghe September 3, 1959. They have 6 children. Carlo predeceased his parents in April 14, 1969. Sal and the children live in Dawson Creek. Arnie Neils born in Grande Prairie on June 10, 1936. Arnie married Faye Rappel December 30, 1959. Lillian Annie born in Grande Prairie September 30, 1940. Lillian married Terry



Left to Right: Lena Blonski, Neils Jacobsen, Clarence Nordvie.

Gosselin and they have two children. Melvin Henry born in Grande Prairie on November 28, 1944.

The cafe was sold and Dad worked and later managed the Fimrites Department Store. In 1955 he bought the service station formerly owned by Wallace McLaughlin and Louis Weigel.

Dad also worked out in years of having the cafe and was a carpenter. He helped to build the former Woking and Chetwynd Hotels. Dad was in Dawson Creek the night the dynamite exploded and the church was destroyed by fire.

Dad gave the Village of Wanham a 99 year lease on some land to build the first curling rink and skating rink. He enjoyed curling immensely and Mother kept the concession for some years.

FRANK JAKUBOWSKI

I came to Wanham with my wife and two children in June, 1929. It was terrible because I did not know anybody and had no place to stay. Two nice people I met, were very kind. They happened to have a little shack, and asked us to stay there. I was very happy. I had a roof over my head. I had very little money, so I worked on their farm and they gave us vegetables and a few other things, and we survived, but it was very hard.

In August we moved to another place, as I needed a bigger house because another child was born. This farm belonged to Joe Meyer, and he asked us to move in with him. I worked for him on the farm, and my wife looked after the house. We stayed there for seven months.

In 1930 I took a homestead, seven miles from Wanham. I built a log house, and we moved in to this one room log house. I made my own furniture, but this was real hardship. I borrowed a horse and a plow, and plowed some land and seeded some wheat. I had a wonderful crop and was so proud of it, but when it was time to harvest the crop, we got a terrible hail storm and we were left with nothing. I couldn't pay my land tax, so we lost this homestead. In 1931 I took another place, and that's where I settled. This was the S.E. 1/4 Section 30, Township 77 West 6th Meridian. I moved the log house from the other homestead, and slowly I built on to it as the family got bigger and the years went by. My wife and I worked very hard for many years before we got some money.



Frank ready to seed in 1940.



Mrs. Jakubowski

BABYS NIPPLE

I remember one day I went to Wanham with 4 dozen eggs. I got to the store, and asked the store keeper if he would give me a nipple for our baby for the 4 dozen eggs, but he wouldn't.

One year I remember I tried to ship a 3-year old steer, three times to Edmonton, but there was no room on the freight, so I finally sold him for \$18.00 to a store keeper.

We had it very very hard in those days, but by working hard we survived. We had some good times also.

I remember one evening I went over to see my good friend, Joe Meyer. We had a few drinks; soon a few other guys came along, so Joe decided we would all go to see another friend of his. We all got into his car but had no lights, so he got a lantern and got one fellow to sit on the hood with this darn lantern. We got on the road, doing fine but as we came along to a small bridge he couldn't see too good and over we went into a ditch!. The fellow with the lantern went flying, so we never did get there.

THE JANZENS: LATECOMERS



The Henry Janzen family. Back Row, Left to Right: Henry, Agnes, Linette and Lauren. Front Row: Dale and Keith.

Agnes and Henry were married in the fall of 1960 at Coaldale, Alberta where they had grown up. They bought a farm in the Grande Prairie that fall. They also lived in the Wembly area from 65-73, continuing to farm the Grande Prairie place. In 1973, they moved back to the Grande Prairie farm and in 1980, they bought the Earl Lang place in the Peoria District. The eldest son, Lauren, married in the fall of 1980. He and his wife reside in Edmonton.

YEARS IN THE NORTH

by Bernice (Jennings) Cooper

In 1949 Jack Jennings with his wife Grace, three sons Art, Floyd and Harvey, and myself Bernice, set out with high hopes and dreams. For us at that time the Great North was the 'land flowing with milk and honey'. There was real excitement in the air. Our first feeling of the new life was warmth, as a friendly farmer waved from the field. The atmosphere was fresh, clean and exciting. There was no insight as to what really lay ahead.

The first year, 1949-50, our home base was West Vale, where Harvey and I went to school and Mom taught. That fall and spring Dad, and the two older boys, spent most of their time on the homestead, living the fall in a tent, and the spring in a granary.

The first big step of our dream began the spring and summer of 1950, with the building of our first new home. The men had worked all winter in logging camps to bring home the lumber. Our hopes were high!

We lived on the homestead from 1950-52. Those years, and many to follow, were intermingled with hopes, fears, joys and tears.

A MOTHER AND TEACHER

Mom taught in the Lassiter School for two school terms. There was a real closeness between Mom and me those years. Having her both for a mother and teacher, we were almost inseparable. I look back to those years and my mother, with total amazement. We had 2 1/2 miles to go each day. Most days we walked. I can't imagine today anyone walking 2 1/2 miles to work, then home again - only to cook supper, wash clothes, many times pack the water, go to bed, and start all over again tomorrow. There were mornings we'd cross over fresh bear tracks. How brave a mother must be to smile and say "It's OK, Dear, he's already gone by".

When the men folk were home, we got rides with the horses and buggy or motor vehicle. So many cold mornings, I remember my brothers out there with a fire under the truck to get us to school. For impossible weather, my brothers made skis for us to cross-country ski to school.

We had many good times. There were the Saturday night community card games, dances, Christmas concerts, all with the babies sleeping on benches and floors. Grocery orders were left at the school and families took turns shopping and picking up the mail. The Burnt River Hill, at that time, was not inviting and certainly not travelled over unless necessary. (In the winter or rainy time) The pioneer spirit was great!

Fearful times came those years when the rain failed to fall. Three years in a row crops failed so bad, the farmers were subsidized by Prairie Farmer Association. This was both humiliating and discouraging. Dreams were fading, but determination carried on.

Harvey left home at 16, to live on his own.

Floyd and Art each applied for their own land. This meant many hours both on the land and repairing machinery. The years were rough and becoming heart breaking, as is the case when it seems fate can't be beaten.

The fall of 1952 Mom and I moved into Wanham. I have little knowledge, from that time on, of what happened on the farm, except that Dad and the boys worked the farm during the spring, summer and fall, and worked in logging or construction camps during the winter. The years weren't all bad, but the good wasn't good enough to compensate.

Art kept his farm through to his death in 1956. Floyd kept his until after his marriage to Shirley Ramage, in 1957. Dad, I believe, toughed it out until about 1965, when he sold out to John Uhryn.

From 1952 until 1956 in the fall Mom taught school in Wanham. For me, living in the school yard sure beat a 2 1/2 mile walk to school. Then too, I no longer had my mother as teacher. Granted, I still had to toe the mark, as there were teachers all around me. For Mom I can't write too much but I am sure for her it was easier too. She made close friends, with whom she corresponded and spoke often in later years.

Mom and I left Wanham in 1957, returning south. This time with different hopes, but still with faith for our future.

As mentioned earlier, Art passed away in 1956. The accident occurred while swimming in Lake McGregor near Vulcan, Alberta. The tragedy hit the family hard.

Floyd and Shirley were blessed with six beautiful children. But tragedy struck again, when in a car accident December 20, 1969, Floyd passed on to be with his older brother, Art.

Harvey, still single and well, is presently living in Fort Saint John, B.C.

Dad, remarried to Eileen Cooper, is now living in Calgary. He is doing well, dancing several nights a week and on March 10, 1980, celebrated his 78th birthday.

Mom remarried also, to James Curley. She and Jim had two good years before her passing on March 19, 1977. God bless her!

As for myself, now mother of three and grandma of one -- well, I thank God for all things. Bill Cooper and I were married 1957 -- divorced 1972. I am now living in Calgary, and I look back over the years in the North as being good years. Though there were many hard times, there was also a lot of love, caring and sharing. I am a very grateful person today, for being there has helped to bring me here.



PETER JENSEN

submitted by George Olsen

Peter Jensen was a short man, slightly on the tubby side. He was a bachelor and had a high pitched voice which got higher when he got excited or angry. He was in his early forties when he took his homestead, (July 13, 1928) which was to the west of my place, (George Olsen) with just road allowance between us. We used to visit back and forth quite often, in the early days.

I remember that the first summer, Mr. Jensen lived in a tent until he built a small log house about 12'x 16', which he moved into for the winter. Then he got some horses and machinery and cleared some land.

Peter was an avid stamp collector and well versed in the affairs of the world, and had done a fair amount of travelling.

There were a few funny incidents which happened with Mr. Jensen, in fact there were enough to fill a story book, but suffice perhaps to relate a couple.

"PONY"

One time I was stooking across from Peter, when I noticed that he was having trouble getting started cutting grain. I went over to see what was wrong and if I could help him. He had a small horse which he called "Pony", a true description of the animal, which was quite a bit smaller than the other horses. Peter said, "I can't get Pony to pull, George; I gave her the advantage of the eveners and I gave her an extra portion of oats this morning, but she won't budge!" I looked the situation over, and I said,

"I've got something at my house that is just what your Pony needs. Just wait here 'til I get it."

So Peter waited for me, while I went home and got a bamboo binder whip that I had. I gave it to Peter and said, "Now use it!"

He got up on the binder and brought the whip down on Pony's hind end. The horse was so startled at this treatment that she set off at a run, and the rest of the horses followed her. Poor Peter couldn't hold them, and they cut across his field which was to be cut, and headed for a willow slough beside the field. I tell you, the bundles were flying out of the machine, and when the horses finally stopped, all I could see of the whole outfit was Peter's head showing above the willows. He finally got the binder and horses back out to the field, and after cleaning some willows out of the binder and repairing one harness strap, he was ready to try it again. He cut grain until he came to my side of the field, and he called out to me, asking if he could use the whip for the rest of the field. He said, "That is the best medicine I have used on Pony yet."

I said, "Sure," trying hard not to laugh!

CLEVER COLT

Another time I went to see Mr. Jensen and he was coming in from the pasture.

He said, "George, I can't find my yearling colt. I've

looked all over the pasture.”

I said, “Let’s both of us look.” So we did, but could find no trace of the colt.

Finally Peter said, “Let’s go make a cup of tea.” So we went to the house and Mr. Jensen opened the door. To our astonishment, there was the colt, in the house!

Jensen said, “Well, look at that! The colt must have gotten cold and went in the house and he even closed the door behind him! Isn’t he smart?”

To continue with Mr. Jensen’s history, he finally sold his homestead and bought a half-section, to the north of my place. Later on he sold the half and went to Okanagan Falls, B.C., where he bought a nice little modern house. He then met a widow lady, who lived in Keremeos, B.C. He sold his house in Okanagan Falls, married the widow, and lived with her in Keremeos until the time of his death.

THE RICHARD JOHNSON FAMILY

Richard Johnson was born on October 30, 1888, in Storuman, Sweden. In 1905, at the age of seventeen, he immigrated to Leonard, Minn. U.S.A. to stay with an uncle. After several years working lumber camps he heard stories circulating around of the Peace River Country - a new ‘Utopia’, where the grain grew 6 feet tall. This sounded like a good prospect for farming. With acquaintances also thinking that it would be a good idea to go and take a look at this ‘Utopia’, they left their jobs and packed up their belongings. Dad, along with Pete Anderson, August Johnson, Pete Nelson, Seth Anderson, and Hugo Young left the States in March of 1914, travelling by train to Edmonton. The remainder of the trip was made by foot from Edmonton, via Edson to Grande Prairie over what was known as the Edson Trail.



The Richard Johnson home in 1929 on his homestead west of Wanham.

The trip was hard going, and adding to their hardships they ran out of grub. Reaching ‘Goodwins Crossing Stop-over’ on the Smoky River, they were hoping to purchase some supplies to carry them over until reaching Grande Prairie, but were refused. Luckily further down the trail, they came to a homestead where the lady of the home gave them supper and breakfast. She let them purchase a little flour and other items to hold them over, until they reached Grande Prairie. Replenishing their

grub stake there, they continued the balance of the journey to the Wanham area, which was then known as Grizzly Bear Prairie. After looking around the area, Dad decided to file on the homestead, NE 1/4 1-78-4-W6. The rest of the fellows settling in the area as well, except for one in Prestville and one in Spirit River. After filing on their homesteads, in late April, they all walked out over the Edson Trail, back to the States to work until the following spring. With the coming of spring, they set out again. Like the previous time, they took the same trail. This time they were to stay. When he returned in 1915, the railway line had been surveyed right through his quarter. (Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia R.R.) Spirit River was the nearest post office in those early years. This distance was shortened when Prestville opened a post office, but finally Wanham got a post



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Johnson.

office. A log one room shack was erected shortly. The clearing of land by hand, breaking it by horses, began. A little extra money was made by trapping and working at McCrimmons Mill. Here many of the homesteaders worked. In 1919, an Avery tractor was purchased in partnership with August Johnson. Around 1927 Dad purchased a steam engine, followed later by a large Rumley threshing machine. Many a straw pile was seen on farms near and far, for many years to come. Around 1928, the old one room shack was replaced by a large new hewed timber house. It had a look of distinction with a large veranda with pillars. The large front room had stained colored glass across the top of each window, plus a hard wood floor. Upon completion of the house, Dad held a dance. People came from the surrounding area, as far as Prestville. Dad cooked a large ham, for sandwiches. The ladies remarked that they were the best ham sandwiches they had ever eaten. In 1929 Dad thought it was time to visit his brother in Saskatchewan. He had not been out of the country since arriving, except for a quick trip to Edmonton, when called for military duty. Upon arriving he learned Armistice was just signed. While in Saskatchewan he met his future wife, Ruth Albertson. They were married the following winter on January 27, 1930. Returning to Wanham by train they breakfasted in the Wanham Hotel, then owned by Prevost. While there they met Mrs. Murphy, the first lady Mother met in Wanham. She was a truly kind lady, who helped many of

the family's in the area bring their children into the world. This was to hold true, for the following winter with the help of Mrs. Murphy, and Dr. Revely, Gloria arrived on January 12, 1931. I can still remember my dad saying, he had to haul No. 1 wheat, by team, for one week at 18 cents a bushel to pay the doctor the \$25.00 fee. The following year a brother, John, arrived on January 22, 1932, again with help of our kind neighbor Mrs. Murphy. On June 25, 1934 another daughter, Eunice arrived.

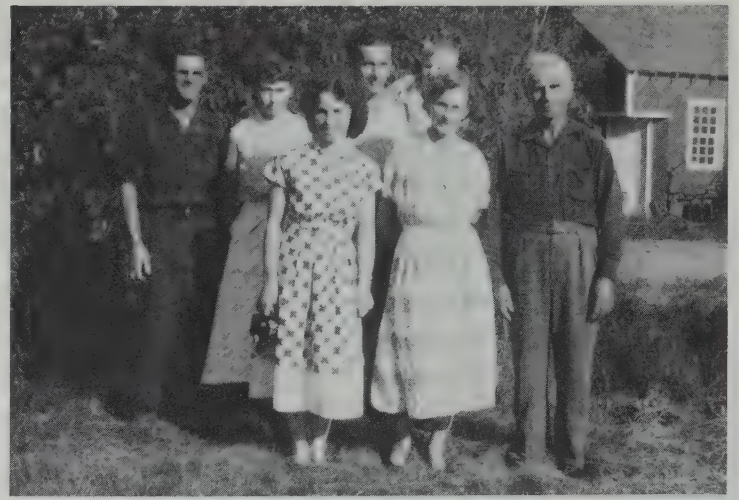
The following years were busy, busy years, the house taking on the look of much wear and tear, with three small active children. Dad had a small saw and planer mill. Mother had men to cook for. Endless numbers of men and a few women as well, riding the freight trains in search of work during the hungry thirties, would jump off the train as soon as it slowed at the fill near our place. They would come in looking for a hot meal, which never was refused. With the purchase of our first Marconi Radio, (the first in the area - bought from Pete Tansem), the bachelor neighbors, Joe Meyers, Guy Norton, Carl Erstad, and others would come to listen to the news, etc. until the station was shut off the air. During this time many a cup of coffee and much cake was consumed. Eventually everyone had a radio in their home.



Johnny, Vera, Mr. Johnson, Mrs. Johnson.

TRIPS TO THE BEDROOM

By this time Gloria and John were getting bigger. They also got mischievous as the days went by. They made more frequent trips to the bedroom, with drawers down and bottoms red. One time there was the near derailment of the speeder. They took a pile of old ties that were replaced by new ones and piled them in a large neat pile on the track, only to have them scattered by a train with a cattle guard. Next day they decided to try again. Only this time we weren't so lucky. A speeder just stopped in time. After surveying the situation, tracks were spotted leading to the only house close by, ours. It just had to be them. After explaining to Mother his findings, he related the seriousness of this matter which could have easily caused a serious accident had the speeder hit the pile. Mother took action. To this day the trip to the bedroom is still remembered. There were many more of these mischievous acts, too many to mention here, thus the



Back Row, Left to Right: Johnny, Vera, Bill Feniak holding Carey. Front Row: Gloria, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Johnson.

rumblings in the neighbourhood were, "those Johnson kids are the worst kids in the country".

Soon the question of schooling arose. The nearest school, Royal Winner was three miles away. This seemed a little far away. Only about two months of schooling was taken there. In the fall of 1938, Dad moved to the farm, SW 3-78-w6, which is still in the family near Wanham. The South Slope School was across the road. We packed up our belongings and left behind the many happy memories of our early childhood. A new life began with lots of new neighbors. The Sawers, Camerons, Bryndzaks, the Olson's, Christensens, Manzulenkos', further out the Nelitz's, Putios', Jakubowsky's and Stepaniuks all had children who were to be our school friends for years to come. The years slipped by. Each year there was the annual Christmas concert, a 2 or 3 hour programme with skits, singing, and last of all the hour long play. One year the prime play was, "Olga from the Volga". The musical festival, held each spring, displayed the various talents of the pupils who were judged according to points. One must not forget the track meets, the competing with the nearby schools. The winter months saw countless trips across the fields, where we all met for a good old skate on Olson's dam. Later when hands and feet nearly frozen we would all troup into Mrs. Olson's kitchen to warm up with cocoa, and heaping slices of home made brown bread, thickly spread with cranberry jelly.

All too soon we all grew up, many of us not completing grade twelve. The search for a job to make a few dollars seemed far more important than an education, a decision which many of us later regretted.

Within a very few short years, more changes. Our family grew larger when Gloria, working in Fimrite's Department Store since leaving school, met and married Bill Feniak on November 16, 1950. A son was born to them on September 24, 1953. Carey Wayne.

June 29, 1953 saw Eunice married to Alan Steele of Edmonton, Alta. They raised six children Janet, Ricky, Karen, Jimmy, Terry, and Dianne. All still make their home in Edmonton.

On July 4, 1957, John was married to Vera Rye. Born to them were 4 children, Gordon, Wendy, Glenna and

Amanda.

John is still farming the original homestead.

Our dad, after seeing his family all grown up and with children of their own, passed away on July 10, 1969 after a lengthy illness. He was 80 years of age. His resting place is Wanham Belloy Cemetery.



*The Johnson children
John, Gloria and
Eunice.*

THE NOBLE JOHNSTON FAMILY

ONE OF THE FIRST FAMILIES IN THE WEST VALE DISTRICT

by Alice Johnston

Noble Johnston was born and raised in the town of Wingham, Ontario. While still a young man, he decided to go west. He met and married Maria Cornelia Ruthen, in Humboldt, Saskatchewan. They came to Alberta and bought a quarter section of land, about one and one-half miles from Big Valley. They raised cattle and Mr.



*Francis and
Arthur Johnston
taken at their
home in Big Val-
ley.*

Johnston kept his job on a wrecking crew for the railroad. Mrs. Johnston was a midwife and would travel around the district with horse and buggy, delivering babies. During the epidemic she looked after several sick families. Mrs. Johnston and her family managed to escape the flu.

In 1919 Mr. Johnston, his family and his partner Arthur Bryant, decided to take their herd of cattle to the Peace River country. They settled in the district that later on would be known as West Vale. Arthur Bryant didn't stay, but carried on with his former job. It was early fall so they were unable to put up much feed for the cattle, so had to buy it and haul it quite a distance. It was a cold, hard winter, and as a result, they lost a large percentage of their herd in the spring.

SOD-ROOF CABIN

During the first year they stayed in an old trapper's

cabin. It had a sod roof and when it rained it poured muddy water everywhere inside the cabin. Mrs. Johnston slept with an umbrella over her head. The rest had to suffer the unpleasant consequences.

During the winter they got out logs to build their new home.

In 1925 Francis passed away at the age of twenty-three. At the time of her untimely death, she was engaged to be married to Arthur Bryant. She is buried in Heart Valley cemetery.

Mrs. Johnston passed away in 1940 and Mr. Johnston in 1951. They are also buried in Heart Valley cemetery.

ARTHUR NOBLE JOHNSTON

Arthur was born in Edmonton on July 28, 1909. He spent his early childhood in Big Valley, Alberta. In 1919, at the age of ten, he moved with his family to the Peace River country. He was the first white child in the West Vale District. He received his elementary and part of his junior high school education in Rycroft, Alberta. He lived with a bachelor farmer, doing chores and housework for his room and board. He walked to school and took his lunch, which consisted of a fried egg sandwich. Once in awhile, he would have an apple.

In 1925, at the age of fourteen, Arthur had to quit school and help with the work at home. He was very musical, teaching himself to play the violin by means of a music course he ordered from the U.S.A. Arthur and some other musician friends played for dances and other occasions, in the surrounding districts.

In 1930, Arthur met Alice Hawkinson, (the first West Vale teacher). They were married in 1932, in Spirit River by the Rev. G.S. Cassmore - United church minister. Witnesses were J.K. Smith and Elinor Tough of Spirit River. Their wedding supper was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J.K. Smith.

Their first home was built of logs that Arthur had gotten out during the winter. He built his home with the help of his neighbors, Paul and Carl Nagel.

The happy union of Art and Alice produced five children, Calvin, Marilyn, Barbara, Larry and Nola.

When the eldest child reached high school age, a major



Mr. and Mrs. Johnston and Victoria Lipinski. They are standing in front of the buggy Mrs. Johnston used when visiting the sick in Big Valley. In later years she had difficulty getting into the buggy so had to walk a plank. It is shown directly behind them propped up against the front wheel.

decision had to be made because there were no high school facilities in Wanham. In 1946, the Johnston family moved to Mayerthorpe, the former home of Alice Johnston.

Arthur was a partsman for Crockett Motors in Mayerthorpe, from 1948 to 1972, when he retired. At his retirement party Arthur received a beautiful plaque for 25 years of outstanding and dedicated service.

During the first years in Mayerthorpe he played in an orchestra, was a member on the United Church board, and was a very active member of the Mayerthorpe Lion's club. He was one of their charter members. He took the Christopher course in public speaking and won the top honor. His sense of humor and jovial character won him many friends in the West Vale and Mayerthorpe Districts.

Alice taught grade one in Mayerthorpe, from 1954 to 1972, when she retired.

In 1973, Art and Alice sold their home in Mayerthorpe and bought an acreage near Stony Plain, Alberta. Here they built their dream home, a lovely ranch-type, where they had hoped to spend a few years of retirement together. But it was not to be. In February, 1975, the doctors discovered that Art had leukemia, and on May 31, 1976 he succumbed to the dread disease. He now rests in Westlawn Cemetery, Edmonton.

Alice lives alone on their acreage.

All five children completed their school educations in Mayerthorpe. Calvin went on to attend the University of Alberta, graduating with a degree in civil engineering. He is manager of the water works department for the City of Calgary. Calvin was also director on the Western Canada Water and Sewage conference. At the present time, he is



Arthur as a boy.

running for Vice President. In 1960 he married Elizabeth Boyer from Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. They have three children, Grant, Karen and Jeffry, and reside in N.W. Calgary.

Marilynn took a stenographer course at MacTavish Business College. In 1962, she married A.W. Landers, a petroleum engineer from Lampases, Texas. They now reside in Denver, Colorado with their two children, Shawna and Carey.



Art and Alice's first home with children.

In 1955, Barbara married druggist, Larry Helland of Rochfort Bridge, Alberta. They live on an acreage near Stony Plain. Larry commutes from home to his drug store in Dickensfield, Edmonton. They have three children, Laurel, Sheralynn and David.

In 1959, Larry married Fay Ament of Whitecourt. Larry is a mechanic and works for the city of Calgary. He is very active in the Masonic Lodge. Last year he held office of Master. They have three children, Dwayne, Darlene and Darla, and live in S.E. Calgary.

Nola graduated from the University of Alberta, in 1958, as a physiotherapist. After graduation, she went to Vancouver to do her interning, working for the Workmen's Compensation Board.

In September 1959, Nola joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a physiotherapist and was stationed in the east at Rockcliffe, until 1961. At Rockcliffe she met Dr. Eli Tanasiuk from Andrew, Alberta, a doctor in the Canadian Army. Dr. Tanasiuk served with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders in the Canadian Army's



Larry and Barbara on "Old Sooie".



Marilyn on "Old Betsy" - she would walk for the cows and ride "Old Betsy" home.

second division. He saw action in the liberation of the lowlands. For eighteen months, during 1956-58, he served with the United Nations Supervisory Truce Commission in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Nola and Eli were married in 1960. When Eli was posted to the Gaza strip in the Middle East, Nola and her sister, Marilynn, followed him. Nola and Marilynn lived in Cairo for a month, then went to Beirut, Lebanon, where Nola would be nearer to Eli. Here Nola and Eli's first baby, Marie, was born in September, 1961. In



Back Row, Left to Right: Arthur, Calvin, Marilyn. Front Row: Larry, Barbara, Alice and Nola.

December, 1961, Nola, baby Marie, and Marilyn returned to Canada. Eli followed a few weeks later.

In 1962 Eli, with a rank of Major, left the army to take post graduate studies in radiology, graduating in 1967. He was a partner in the firm of Associated Radiologists. Eli, Nola with their two children Marie and Terry lived in Edmonton until Eli's death in June, 1973, after a long fight with leukemia. Nola and children now live on an acreage near Stony Plain. Nola works at the Royal Alexandra hospital as a physiotherapist.

STUART AND MARGARET JONES

by Stuart Jones

Both Margaret and I are Albertans. We were married in December of 1935. We have two children; David, born in 1939, and Beverly, in 1950. We have lived all of our lives in Alberta, except for three years which were spent in Houston, Texas.

I took my normal school teacher training in Calgary, graduating in 1933. For the next five years I taught at various Alberta schools, before going to Wanham in September, 1938, to teach at the newly built South Slope School. It was a two room school and had been completed just before my arrival, so I was the first principal and teacher. The junior room was taught by Margaret Ramsey. However, after a month or two, she resigned and was replaced by Grace Wishart. At the beginning of my second year in Wanham, the old school was reopened to be the high school, where I taught grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Grace Wishart and Miss Horne taught the two rooms of the school.

GREAT VICTORY

Our school softball team, for the first time ever, won the trophy from Belloy. I can't remember the name of the trophy, but it was a great victory.

Our son, David, was born in October of 1939. I told the kids, on the morning that he and his mother arrived by train, that I wouldn't be back for awhile. Imagine my surprise and delight to find everyone in his place and busily working, when I returned from meeting the train.

Speaking of trains, in the fall of 1939, I caught a ride from Edmonton to Grande Prairie. However, there was a terrific rainfall and the roads from Grande Prairie to Wanham were impassable. I caught the caboose of the freight and rode it to Wanham. I was a day or two late but that was the best I could do.

FRANCE FALLS

Margaret and I remember the day France fell, because Mr. St. Pierre sat on the sidewalk and cried.

The school board was short of money, so my cheques were few and far between. We bought our groceries at the local stores. They charged the cost against their taxes.

During our first year in Wanham, we lived in a one-room house near the school. It wasn't available for the second year, so I bought a lot from Mr. Prevost and, with Elmer Hill's help, built a two-room house on it. When I left Wanham, the house was sold and moved to a farm. I gave the lot back to Mr. Prevost.

SPORTS

We had wonderful times at sports. In winter badminton was played in the old hall. We had a hockey team and I still have a scar on my chin where someone hit me with a stick. The card game, 'Smear', played in Nels Jacobsen's restaurant, was a favorite pastime. In summer we played horseshoes, tennis and baseball.

The years spent in Wanham were among the best of my life. After leaving, I worked for five years as transmitter engineer at CKVA. During this time, I went to university and gained a degree in Electrical Engineering. Margaret operated the transmitter while I was in class, so my B. Sc. Degree is as much hers as mine.

After graduating, I worked for Alberta Government Telephones in Edmonton for two years and then joined an oil well service company called Schlumberger. I remained with that company for eighteen years, during which time I lived in Edmonton, Houston, Texas, and Calgary.

In 1966, I came to Banff to a position of being in charge of building and maintenance at the Banff School of Fine Arts, where I still am. However, I have reached retirement age and will soon be leaving.

JOHN KANDT FAMILY

by Frieda Brown

The John Kandt family history began on November 4, 1909, when John married Rosie Grieg in North Dakota, U.S.A.

In 1913 they and their young son, Leo, were lured to Canada in search of farming land.

They took up a homestead on Section 6, Township 16, Range 25, West of the 3rd meridian, which was ap-



The Kandt Brothers. Left to Right: Leo, Bert, Bob, Dave and Ben.

proximately 30 miles north of Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. Like many a pioneer, their first home was a sod shanty. Here four of their children were born - Bert, Sophie, Amanda and Frieda. During this time, they endured the first war years and deadly influenza, which followed. Needless to say, they experienced many hardships. One of the more difficult tasks was to haul their grain 30 miles to Maple Creek. This was usually done in the winter and took two days for the round trip.

After 1921, they rented another farm which meant a larger home for the growing family and brought them closer to a country school. The five older children attended a little country one-roomed school named Inglebrecht.

In the summer of 1925, the railway came to Fox Valley, which was just about 10 miles to the north. Now Dad could make the trip with a load of grain in just one day. Before the elevators were built, the grain was loaded into the box cars.

In the fall of 1925, we moved to a farm two miles south of Fox Valley. The children now had the opportunity to attend school in town, which also gave them a chance to attend high school.

DIRTY THIRTIES

The bumper crops of 1927 and 1928 meant a better way of life for us. It also meant a change in farming methods, as we purchased new machinery, such as a tractor and a threshing machine. In 1929, a dry spring and hot summer resulted in a smaller crop, compared to the bountiful harvest of the year before. In 1931, came the strong westerly winds which peeled off the top soil. This was the first of the great blizzards that gave this decade the name, 'Dirty Thirties'.

In 1932, with searing winds and soaring temperatures, the new crops were fated to go the way of those of previous years. For the next few years high dry winds and the grasshoppers turned the prairie into a dust bowl, which caused much hardship for the farmers. Many a farmer was forced to apply to the government for assistance.

It was during this time Dad became very active in

community affairs. He was Reeve of the Fox Valley municipality for a number of years. This proved to be a full time and tiring job, especially when called upon to distribute the box cars of apples and coal among the unfortunate people who were on relief. Dad was even called on by some poor farmers suffering with a toothache, to act as their dentist. Imagine the agony the poor fellow had to endure when the tooth was pulled, without being frozen.

We partially depended on our dairy cattle for our livelihood. Since our cows supplied us with more milk than we could use, we delivered quarts of milk to the residents in town. This helped buy many necessities even though we often received only 4¢ a quart. Because of Mother's great generosity, many a poor family would receive milk without charge. It was on one of these milk trips to town that Robert, Esther and Ben escaped a near disaster. One evening on their way home a sand blizzard overtook them and they became lost. When Robert realized their predicament, he unhitched the team of horses and tied them to the back of the democrat to outwait the storm. Later at night, when the storm abated, the R.C.M.P. found them, just south of the farm, and brought them home.



The Kandt Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Ezra Reiswig, Harriet (Reiswig) Kandt, Dave Kandt, Ben Kandt, Maggie (Kandt) Reiswig. Front Row: Esther (Kandt) Kneller, Mother Kandt, Bob Kandt.

One of our enjoyable outings was our yearly chokecherry excursion. This meant getting up at 4:30 a.m. and travelling in wagons and democrats to the Great Sand Hills of Saskatchewan. After a hot, tiring day, we returned home just after dark with tubs of chokecherries. We even had a few hazardous happenings, such as the time Ben and Esther got lost in the sand dunes. They gave us a real scare until we found them.

Always a menace and a worry were the dust storms. In the worst years, the fields were a sea of turtle backs or soil drifts over Russian thistles. As the dry years continued, many a dust bowl farmer gave up in disgust and headed west or north.

It was in the summer of 1937, that Dad drove Mr. and

Mrs. Hagel to Peoria. At that time he rented the Munro farm just south of Wanham. In the fall, after selling most of our cows, we headed north. Needless to say, we experienced many changes. However, after we overcame the hemmed-in feeling and became accustomed to those monstrous mosquitoes, we were happy with our new home.



Bert and Opal Kandt with daughters, Sheila, Roberta, Shirley Ann and Marilyn.

After living at the Munro farm for two years, we moved to the Ziprick farm in Peoria in 1939. How delighted we were to live in a larger house and be nearer the church. Dad and Mother enjoyed their association with the church and took an active part in it.

Ben and Esther now attended in Peoria Church School. However, Dave and Frieda continued their high school in Wanham, staying with Leo and Emma, who now lived on the Munro place.

Then came the war years in which Bert, Sophie and Robert served in the army.

After Robert came back, he and Dave worked many a day in the bush cutting logs for the Rottacker mill.

Amanda and Frieda went to university and came back to teach here: Amanda in East Peoria, and Frieda at Mersey School.

Ben continued his schooling in Peoria. Esther went to Canadian Union College in Lacombe, then in 1947 on to nursing school in Glendale, California.

In 1945, Mother and Dad moved to Rutland. Here they celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary, in 1959. Dad passed away in Rutland in July, 1962. After this, Mother lived with Esther most of the time; first in Portland, Oregon, then at Williams Lake and finally at Smithers, B.C.

Mother passed away on December 31, 1976, and was laid to rest beside Dad, in Rutland Cemetery.

Our family consisted of ten children, of which *Leo* was the oldest. On July 3, 1932, he married Emma Ritz in Leader, Saskatchewan. Their three children were born at Fox Valley, Saskatchewan. They came to the Wanham District in 1937, residing on the Cameron farm until they moved to the Munro farm. Their next move was to their homestead, south of Belloy. Today they live at Wynndel, B.C. Their son, Marvin, married Elsie Ferster. They live

in Williams Lake, B.C. They have four children: Glenda, John, Terry, and Roland.

Lillian and Anthony Mountjoy, with their four children, live in Calgary. Their children are Yvonne, Darcy, Keith and Paul.

Dalhene and Hance Millner, with their five children, Colleen, Geraldine, Patricia, John Robert and Loralee, live in Calgary.

Maggie married Ezra Reiswig, on June 14, 1939. They farmed east of the church in Peoria until they moved to their present farm south of Belloy. Their oldest daughter, Patricia, married Larry Halleson. They reside in Portland, Oregon. Jeanette and Robert Norton with their two sons, Ricky and Robbie, live in Prince Rupert, B.C.

Bert married Opal Bechthold on July 10, 1941. They lived in Calgary, until they moved to the home place in Peoria in 1945. In 1954 they headed south to Patricia, Bassano, Vulcan, and then Calgary. Opal taught school until 1979. Just before Bert retired he worked for Jacques Funeral Home. They had four daughters: Sheila May and David Garrow, with their children Jill and Mark, live in Roseberg, Oregon. Roberta Chowanietz and her two boys, Gregory and Robert, live in Creston, B.C. Shirley Ann and Sherwin Georlitz and their children, Shelby and Sherilee, make their home in Peachland, B.C. Marily, the youngest daughter, lives at home and works for the Mobile Oil Company.

Sophie and Frank White were married on October 26, 1945. From Calgary they moved to farm in the West Vale District. Because of Frank's health, they moved to Wanham. After they left Wanham, they moved first to Jasper Place and then Sherwood Park. Here they lived until Frank passed away in 1964. Sophie and her family of five then moved to Vancouver. Today she lives with her oldest daughter, Wendy, in Vernon, B.C. Wendy and Bernie Gagnon have two children, Michelle and John Paul.

Brian married Yursa Jensen and lives in Surrey, B.C.

Wayne married Gail Parker. They and their daughters, Sara and Joli, reside at Courtney, B.C.

Maureen and Dave Sturrock, who is employed by the Shell Oil Co., are in England at the present time.

Debbie and Richard Arkwright live at Vanderhoof, B.C.

Amanda and Fred Bacon-Shone were married on August 24, 1948. Today Amanda is the women's dean at Newbold College in England. Her oldest son, Fred, his wife, Marjory and their two children, live in England. John is teaching at the university in Hong Kong.

Frieda and Donald Brown, who were married on November 12, 1947, live in Hussar, Alberta. Don is still busy farming, but Frieda retired from teaching in 1976.

Robert took a homestead south of Belloy. On November 17, 1946, he married Margaret Kusmann. However, he decided to continue his education. In 1960 he graduated as a general practitioner from the Loma Linda Medical College. After several years of medical practice, he re-entered medical college and became an anaesthetist. Today he works at the Portland Hospital and Sanitorium. Their only daughter, Caroline, is a missionary nurse in Zaire, Africa.

David married Harriet Reiswig on April 25, 1946. He

also took a homestead south of Belloy. He is still engaged in farming with his son Randy. Randy married Marthalyn McCreery and lives on the same farmstead as Dave. They have two children, Karla and Leonard.

Esther continued her nursing career for many years. She kindly took good care of our mother, after Dad passed away. On April 6, 1967, she married Herman Kneller. Today they and their son, Bryon, live at Smithers, B.C., where Herman is a Lay Preacher.

Ben married Ann Yuros on December 17, 1955. He worked in the logging camp until he hurt his knee. He took a bookkeeping course and became the company bookkeeper. They had two children, Marlys and Gregory. Ann met with an untimely death in 1965. In 1966, Ben married Marina Faulkner. They have one son, Michael. They live in Langley, B.C., and Ben is still in the lumber business.



Dave and Harriet Kandt.



The Leo Kandt family. Left to Right: Leo, Emma, Darlene, Lillian and Marvin.

LEO KANDT

We arrived at Wanham in October 1937, from Fox Valley, Saskatchewan. This was during the hungry thirties. I say we, which includes my father, mother, brother and sisters, my wife and three children. My brother and I came by freight with our horses and machinery; my wife and children by train. Father and family came by car. The first two years I, with my family, lived on Mrs. Camerons' place, 2 miles south and 1/2 mile west of Wanham. Later we lived on the Fowler place. My father and family lived on the G.D. Monroe

place, 2 1/2 miles south and 1/2 mile east of Wanham. Now it belongs to the Sather Co-op Farm. In 1939 we moved onto the Monroe place, and father and family moved to Peoria, onto the A. Ziprick place, which they later bought. In 1945 I took a homestead in what they now call the Smokey area. That's when the hard work started - until we had some land cleared. In 1949 we moved into our new home, and lived there until 1962. We pulled stakes and moved to Creston where we are now and enjoy it. The most thrilling experience was when we came to Wanham. We arrived on the Monroe place with our horses. Mr. Monroe offered us fresh milk, as he was just milking his cows for the last time. He wanted us to drink just out of the pail. Of course I am spoiled like a sucking calf and drink out of the pail. All I can say is, we enjoyed our stay at Wanham or Peace River Country, and still enjoy coming back once in a while to see familiar faces and friends.

FOR SERVICES RENDERED

by Joe Kennedy

*Between the Burnt and Great Peace River
In Township seventy-nine,
On both the ranges two and three
West of the sixth Meridian line.
You will find the place I have in mind
It's there for all to see,
T'was to be for services rendered,
By protectors of the free.*

*It's an isolated; devastated, burnt out piece of land
That must have slipped and fell, I think
Out of the Master's hand.
For it does not fit the pattern,
Of that great Peace River block.
When the "agronoms" first saw it,
They must have had a shock.*

*To think the Social Credit government
This piece of land would break
Then sell it to the veterans,
And so their fortunes make.
But the "agronoms" being loyal men,
Said yeah to higher pleas
Then started out to hoax the Vets,
And figure out their fees.*

*They started out to try and break
This freakish, hellish pile,
And glorified it in all papers
In high toned royal style.
Then at last the "suckers"
The heros of yesteryear,
Drew lots to find which barren chunk
Of this project was his share.*

*Then he started in with right good will,
But he fought a losing fight,
T'was tougher than any fight he'd had
With the Krauts at Caean at night.
Some lost their health, some lost their all,*

*But still they tried to farm
This hellish piece of nothing,
That isn't worth a darn.*

*What is it twists the minds of men,
Who think they've made the grade;
Who think they'll be the chosen few,
To meet "Pete" in that big parade?
But if a heaven or hell there be,
And I'm sure you won't deny,
You'll find writing big on the gates of hell,
"No Veterans need apply."*

*Now the worst about this awful mess
Is the years that are no more,
And for every ten years put in there,
They age about a score.
But when the last big tally is made
By the boss of that big corral,
It won't be these vets that are culled and driven
Way deep down into hell.*

*By D.U.M. Founded
(Joe Kennedy)
Earl Gingrich*

HENRY KENT

by Mona (Kent) Howard

Henry Kent was born in Waterville, Compton County, Quebec, to Alice and Miles Kent on July 26, 1900. He was the oldest child. He had three sisters and five brothers.

His parents moved to Daysland, Alberta, in 1902, where they went farming.

When Henry started school, the nearest school was eight miles away. He didn't start when he was six.

SAVE THE STRAW HAT

One time when Henry was around ten years old, he was using a team of horses raking hay when he got into a bees nest and his team ran away. Henry fell off and was raked into the hay. He didn't get hurt but he was worried about his new straw hat, a very valuable possession.

When Henry grew up, he spent the winters hauling coal. He drove four horses on a sleigh and led another team and sleigh behind. He would leave for the mines at five o'clock in the morning.

In 1928, he decided to try the Peace River Country, so hired out to a fellow by the name of Wade Trogon who was bringing in some horses on the train to Grimshaw. When he arrived, Wade put him to breaking land with a John Deere-D, at Warrensville, ten miles north of Grimshaw. By the time the breaking was finished, there were no fenders left on the tractor.

From there Henry went to work in Berwyn for another farmer, by the name of Grover Jacobus. He eventually became Henry's brother-in-law, as that's where Henry met his wife Roa Chapman.



Henry Kent feeding baby moose.

Roa was born in Black Duck, Minn. U.S.A., on September 2, 1905. In 1916 Roa's father, Ben Chapman decided to take a homestead in the Peace River country. He travelled ahead of his family to Berwyn, where he built a house on his land, before sending for his family. Someone told Roa's mother, Susan Chapman, that all she could bring with her from the States was the barest necessities so she left her dishes, furniture etc. behind and just brought clothing and very little besides. When they got here they found out they could have brought much more. They suffered many hardships the first few years. Berwyn is built on Ben Chapman's old homestead.

When Roa grew up, she raised many ducks, geese, turkeys and chickens. She did housework for people around Berwyn. Roa worked in the first hospital Berwyn ever had. She was working for her sister, Wilma Jacobus, when she met Henry Kent.

Roa and Henry were married in Grande Prairie, in May 1930. Henry went to work in the slaughter house, butchering, for Frank Donald. He worked with a fellow by the name of Bill Casey.

When they left Grande Prairie, they moved on to their homestead North of Belloy. Roa's sister, Ruby, and her husband Ira Gilmour, had also taken a homestead north of Belloy and so they lived across the canyon from each other for a few years. Ruby and Ira had been living in Grande Prairie, too. Henry and Roa had moved onto their homestead in the late fall, and they lived in a tent for several months until they got a cabin built.

Henry worked for different farmers around Belloy such as Harry Scott, Sid and Walt Francis, and Mr. Ferguson (Old Fergie).

Roa and Henry had five children born at Belloy. They were Chester, Mona, Ben, Lee and Hubert.



Henry and Mona Kent.

MOOSE MEAT

One spring Henry and Roa saved the life of a calf moose. They raised it on cows milk and it was a real pet. One day in the winter time, when Mona was walking across the yard to take her mother the small axe to open the water hole, the moose tried to trample her, and her mother had to jab him several times with the pitch fork before he would leave Mona alone. That was a very close call for Mona, but she escaped unhurt. That night they butchered the moose!

In 1942 Henry and Roa and family moved to Grimshaw to look after Roa's brothers farm while he went into the army. Their second daughter, Alice, was born there.

From there, they lived on rented land, throughout that area. They abandoned their homestead in Belloy and Willard Urness got it.

Mona is married to Jim Howard of Belloy and lives on a farm. They have one daughter and six sons.

Lee is in the airforce, is married and has one son.

Hubert is a bank manager in Calgary, is married and has one daughter and one son.

Alice is married and lives in Edmonton and has two sons.

Henry passed away in 1966, Ben in 1976, and Chester passed away in August of 1978.

Roa has her own home and lives in Berwyn. She started living in Berwyn in 1916, made a complete circle of places to live, and is now back where she started from.



Ben Kent hauling wood.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WANHAM DAYS - 1933 to 35

by Rev. Charles G. Kitney

I arrived in Wanham in September of 1933, and lived a mile south of town in the teacherage near the old school. During the next winter I can recall waking up a few mornings with the temperature inside the shack down to 25 below Fahrenheit. Not having a sleeping bag in those days, I used to pull my cap down over my ears, shake the ashes out of the stove and lay a fire for the next morning. Then, all one had to do was reach out and light the fire, take another forty winks and get up when it got warm. It took a little longer for the water in the wash basin to thaw, of course.

SOUP

Fresh vegetables froze also, and the way to overcome that was to make a large pot of soup, freeze it, break it into chunks (with a hammer and big spike), and store it away in the eave trough in paper bags. It worked fine, always the same flavour, but good! The only trouble was, that when we got an unexpected chinook the soup melted and all ran away except the beans.

Life was full of interesting contradictions. There were families who had just moved in south of Eaglesham, coming from the dried out south. Some had good outfits of machinery, good furniture, and an occasional washing machine, with no gasoline to make it go. One woman in a nicely furnished house couldn't mail a letter to her mother for a month, for lack of the stamp. Engines were removed from cars to make them into Bennett Buggies (4 wheels). The engines sometimes were used to run sawmills. I once saw two engines hooked up in a tandem in a mill.

There were all kinds of substitutes for groceries, especially coffee. Roasted wheat or barley was used, some sprouted first, then roasted. Bread and porridge and even cake, were made from wheat ground in a hand mill. I had one meal in the Stuart Ditch home, then near Eaglesham, where the only item on that table for which they paid cash was salt. We used home-made sugarbeet syrup in place of sugar. But when I think of it, I can't recall that anyone invented a substitute for tobacco.

There were some cases of real suffering and need, some of them in the heavy bush, north of Wanham station. There were children who were not only unable to go to school, but who had to spend all day playing on the bed for lack of shoes and stockings.

GOING DANCING

But there were good times and dances that lasted all night long. That was not surprising when one considers the amount of effort it took some people to get there. A bachelor with a girlfriend had to begin at noon by feeding his stock enough to last 24 hours, take a bath, drive to the girl's place for supper, and feed his team there. Then they were off to the dance and back again in the morning in time for breakfast. Finally, the bachelor was on his way home, to feed and water the stock and then sleep 'till the



Charles Kitney and Elaine Sellers the day they were engaged.

next morning. But in the winter there was time to have a good time.

Church services were fairly well attended, more likely for the satisfaction of talking with neighbors than for the student minister's sermon. But there was sincerity, too. Any other kind of meeting was an occasion, and perhaps most appreciated were the visits paid to out-of-the-way districts by Mr. Albright, from the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm. He came with a generator, one or two electric bulbs and a slide projector and a great deal of wisdom, understanding and encouragement. He knew what people were going through, so he brought advice on what to grow, urged settlers to beautify their homes, and gave us all hope for the future.

Sometimes the school teachers, too, had a tough time in those days. More than one local secretary of the School Board had to visit *enough* neighbours to persuade them to draw in *enough* grain to pay *enough* taxes to pay the teacher *enough* of her salary so that she could buy her ticket home for the summer holidays, after her first year of teaching. Government nurses also served heroically, though Wanham had for a time Dr. Johnston, the first woman to graduate from Cambridge University in Psychological Medicine. Having been told a few years before that she had only a few months to live, she gave the rest of her life to places like Wanham. How a woman with her medical history could endure the long drives - and sometimes walks-through the mud and snow, one wonders. But one thing we remember. Those who forgot and called the Doctor "Nurse" Johnston never made that mistake twice.

What is a road? There was real heroism on the part of many ordinary people and there was wonderful community support for those who were in special trouble. Above all there was amazing ingenuity. How I wish that I had some pictures of the ways in which people managed to hang gates and make latches for barn doors out of forked poplar branches and rawhide. It was not always a pleasure to share in those pioneering days, but it was a privilege. A little pioneering helps a lot in appreciating what we have today. I remember thinking about that one day when I was riding a freshly broken colt through from Spirit River to Pouce Coupe before the road was built. He was afraid of crossing the creeks and every time we

came to one we had a royal battle. How can anyone really understand what a road is, or what a bridge is, who hadn't at sometime been where there was no road and no bridges?

The early days provided a very special kind of educational experience. One came to understand a good deal: a little of what hardship was, a great deal about people, something of the meaning of life and quite a bit about God. They really were great days!

RALPH KLESS

submitted by Doreen Latham of Grande Prairie

Ralph Kless was born in Lapitz, near Penzline, Germany on May 28, 1901. He came to Canada in 1927, and worked for a farmer near Edmonton.

Coming later to the Peace River country, he settled in Heart Valley. He farmed there, along with his father who had followed him from Germany. The land they farmed was along the banks of the Bad Heart. Mr. Kless Sr. passed away in November of 1937, and is buried in the Heart Valley cemetery.

Ralph took on a ready-made family in 1939, when he married Geraldine McCarty. Geraldine filed on a Hudson Bay quarter. Life was lots of hard work, but we had many fine neighbors. I remember how Mrs. Teed and the rest of the neighbors helped out when Mother was so sick, and had to spent time in the Grande Prairie Hospital.

We attended school in Heart Valley. Edith Lee was one of our supervisors, when there were no teachers. We rode horse-back or used a horse and cart. I remember one day on the way home from school with Joyce Lee, stopping to look at a bird's nest, and leaving the horse alone by the road. He suddenly took off and left us, having been frightened by a bear coming across the field. It was a long walk home that day!

When the Heart Valley school closed, we went to West Vale by truck in summer, and horses and caboose in winter. One of our drivers was Art Johnston, and his wife was our teacher.

We did all our farming with horses, and hauled the grain to Wanham for sale. Water was obtained from a dug-out in the summer, and by melting snow in winter. It sure kept a person out of trouble, hauling in the snow!

Heat was provided by a wood-burning stove, and light by a coal oil lamp and later by gas lanterns.

We moved to Wanham in 1946, where Ralph bought a quarter of land north of the tracks. We had to haul water from across the road with a stone-boat and horses. We spilled a good deal with our fooling around.

Ralph did some sheep herding and took out pulp wood. The children attended Wanham School.

In 1950, we moved to Grande Prairie and Ralph went to work full-time for Grande Prairie Lumber. He had worked three winters in their mills south of the Wapiti.

Ralph now spends his winters in Mexico, enjoying the warm sun, and comes back to Grande Prairie in the summertime.

Geraldine and her twin sister, Jeanette were born in Colfax, Washington, U.S.A. in November of 1909, to

Jim and Laura Anderson. They had one brother, and five sisters. The family moved to Biggar, Saskatchewan in 1910, and farmed there. After Laura passed away, Jim moved to Prestville in the Peace River country. He filed on a quarter below Vince Durda on the banks of the Burnt River, living there until he retired to Abbotsford, B.C. He passed away in January, 1957.

Geraldine followed her father, and worked around Spirit River until marrying Ralph and moving to Heart Valley. After their move to Grande Prairie, Geraldine worked as a cook for a few years and then worked at the hospital as an aide, until her retirement in 1975. She passed away in May, 1976, and is buried in Grande Prairie Cemetery.

Jeannette also came to Peace River country and married Edward Gray of Spirit River. They are presently living in Grande Prairie.

Geraldine and Ralph had eight children:

1. *Doreen McCarty*, graduated from Marvel Beauty Culture School in Edmonton. She worked in Grande Prairie until 1957, and married Leon Latham of West Middle Sable, Nova Scotia. Leon works for the Ministry of Transport and they spent 21 years in Northern B.C. and the N.W.T., moving back to Grande Prairie July, 1978.

Leon and Doreen had a family of five - Leslie, born April, 1959, Allister - June, 1960 - July, 1978. (Allister rest in the Grande Prairie Cemetery.) Shauna - November, 1963, Daron - July, 1966, and Marla, September, 1968. Leslie is attending college, and the rest are all at school.

2. *Jeannette McCarty*, was born in April, 1936. She married Clair McAvany of Freemont, Saskatchewan. They farmed with Clair's parents in Saskatchewan for a few years, then moved to Grande Prairie, where Clair was employed in a tire shop. Then they moved to Dawson Creek, B.C., and Clair is now employed by Canadian Freightways. Jeannette and Clair have five children, Clifford - born in August, 1958, is now driving a truck, Betty - born in October, 1961, Ellen - born in September, 1966, Elaine, born in March, 1970, and Stuart - born in September, 1976.

3. *Robert McCarty*, born in July, 1938, married Alice Smith, of Edmonton. They lived in Grande Prairie until Robert's death in 1963. Robert rests in the Grande Prairie Cemetery. Alice moved back to Edmonton and is employed by the Alberta Government.

Robert and Alice had one child, Angela - born April, 1963.

4. *Edward Kless*, born March, 1944, deceased May, 1955 and rests in Grand Prairie Cemetery.

5. *Ione Kless*, born in February, 1946, married Walter Kent of Kentville, Nova Scotia. They lived at Camp Borden for 4 years. Ione returned home and took a hairdresser course at the college, and now lives in Dawson Creek, B.C. Ione has three girls - Violet born in June, 1967, Zinnia - born in June, 1969, and Heather, born in July, 1970.

6. *Lorraine Kless*, born in May, 1948, attended the University of Alberta and graduated as a biologist. She worked in Edmonton and married Walter Conibear of Turner Valley where they lived for a few years before

moving to Vancouver where Lorraine works at the University, and Walter is studying at the University of B.C. for his Bachelors degree in recreation. Lorraine and Walter have one daughter, Krista.

7. *Valerie Kless*, was born in October, 1950 and graduated from the University Hospital as a registered nurse, and worked in Edmonton. She married Robert Townsend of Edmonton. They own a Ski and Cycle shop. Valerie and Bob have three children, Lani - born in May, 1973, Russell, born in February, 1975, and Robin - born in February, 1979.

8. *Phillip Kless*, born in October, 1952, he worked in Grande Prairie until joining the Canadian Army in 1977. He is presently stationed in Victoria, B.C. Phillip is single.

The Kless children attended school in Wanham, and later all graduated from Montrose High School in Grande Prairie.

KOSTASH FAMILY

Nick and Pearl Kostash arrived in Canada after a three week journey by boat from Snatyn, Poland in 1913.

They made their first home in Vegreville, Alberta where they settled for a few years while Nick worked for Canada Packers in Edmonton. Katherine (Kay) their first girl was born in Vegreville. They then moved on to Athabasca, where they homesteaded for awhile and Mary their second girl, was born. The family then moved to Widewater, where Nick went to work for Northern Alberta Railways, and Anne and John were born there. Three other children were born to Nick and Pearl, but died at infancy.

While the family lived in Widewater, Kay had to go to



The Kostash Family. Left to Right: Nick holding Johnny, Kay, Pearl and Annie.

school nearby. Pearl would wash clothes by hand for commercial fishermen working at Slave Lake. She earned approximately .50¢ a day per man, and sometimes washed for up to ten men a day.



Kay Kostash



The Kostash family outside their home in the Belloy area. Left to Right: Anne, Mary, John and parents, Nick and Pearl.

The family made their next move to Wembly, where they lived until they made their final move to the Belloy District, in 1934, and applied for a homestead there. Nick continued to work for Northern Alberta Railways and lived in the section house until a home was built on the farm. During this time, Kay married Bill Wortman and son Lynn was born. After a short time, Bill joined the Canadian Air Force and they made their home in several different places during the war. While residing in Edmonton, Kay passed away at the age of 46.

DEPRESSION

During the depression, when men were riding boxcars and walking, searching for employment, Pearl would never turn anyone away from her door without cooking them a decent meal and also she would make lunches that they would take with them when they left. This went on for quite some time and it was nothing to see five or six men stopping in everyday.

Mary, Anne, and John went to the Steele School, which was a good walk of four miles one way, until a school was built north of Belloy on the Kozeluk farm. Later, a two room school was built in Belloy and was used for quite awhile, but finally closed down and children were then bussed to Wanham.

In 1939 the family moved to their farm north of Belloy, and Nick would walk five miles a day to work on the railroad and when coming home in the evenings he would grub and pick roots, etc.

Anne married Willard Urness in 1942 and two children were born, Keith and Darlene. They settled on the home place one mile north of Belloy that the Urness family lived on for many years, then built a home and are still living and farming there. Anne had the post office in Belloy for a few years and they also built a small store joined to the post office after a fire had taken the Lewis Store.

Mary met and married Tony Vos, the Rawleigh man

from Spirit River. They lived there for a few months until moving to Deadwood where they farmed and raised three children, Jan, Linda and Raymond. When they retired they moved to Peace River where they are still living. Their oldest son, Jan, passed away in 1972 at the age of 26.

John joined the army and stayed with the armed forces for twelve years. He married and had one child, a girl, and now lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he has been for a number of years.

BELLOY

Over the years, the Kostash's saw hundreds of acres cleared and many veterans moving in. At one time Belloy rose to a population of over 200. Gradually people began moving away and soon business places closed down.

Nick retired from the Northern Alberta Railways after thirty-three years. They sold their land north of Belloy and spent the rest of their years living on the farm with Anne and Willard in Belloy.

Nick passed away in 1968, at the age of 80. Pearl lived until 1977, when she too passed away at the age of 80.

They are survived by two daughters Mary Vos and Anne Urness, son John, six grandchildren Lynn Wortman of Ottawa, Ont., Keith Urness of Belloy, Linda Apostolidis of Kelowna, B.C., Darlene Murray of Belloy, Raymond Vos of Taylor, B.C. and John's daughter Candy, and ten great-grandchildren.

Some remaining relatives of Nick and Pearl Kostash reside in the Vegreville - Edmonton area.



The Kostash Golden Wedding Anniversary. Nick and Pearl Kostash, Anne and Willard Urness.

KRISHKA - MADSEN

by Linda Murray and Josie Madsen

William Krishka was born in Gardenton, Manitoba, on April 19, 1921. He moved to the Devale area where his parents decided to farm.

Josie (Josephine Carolyn Bilinski) born January 13, 1927, came to Canada from Poland at the age of 3. Her parents Joseph and Frances Bilinski farmed in the Codesa area.

Josie started her life on her own, working at the Holy Cross Hospital at the age of 18. At this time she met a man who came to the hospital with the delivery man. After the men left the hospital, Bill told the delivery man that he was going to date that girl (Josie). They started

dating later, when Josie had changed jobs and was working at the hotel cafe. When Josie was 19, they decided to share their trials and tribulations together. Their lives became one on October 12, 1946, at Codesa, Alberta. Their first home was across the creeks, in the Devale area. They farmed here for a few years. During the time there, their first child was born. Ernest was born on August 1, 1947, at Spirit River. He died the same day. Josie was very toxic and he took all the poison into his body. A year later a healthy small boy, Philip Gordon, was born August 5, 1948, at Sexsmith, Alberta.

Misfortune struck again a year later when Frances Mary was born on July 14, 1949, at Spirit River. She was RH negative and lived only 5 days.



Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bilinski - 1948.

WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY

Bill was asked to watch a neighbors farm while they went away for awhile. While they were gone, Bill decided to get a batch of moonshine going. The neighbors came back before the moonshine was run off. The neighbor's wife got a little excited 'cause she could smell this horrible smell. The husband said, "Don't get excited, I think Bill is just making a batch of moonshine". And nothing more was said about the matter.

On July 7, 1950, another girl was born at Spirit River. Josie hemorrhaged and had to have 2 pints of blood. The blood bottles had to be dropped by parachute to the ground. The nuns were kneeling outside the hospital praying for a safe drop of this precious and most needed blood.

Bill and Josie moved into the town of Spirit River, with their two children in the winter of 1950, and lived there till they moved to Camrose. For 6 months Bill worked on the rigs, welding.

WHATA DAY

During this summer away, Philip (4) and Linda (2) decided they were going to go play golf so they trekked the mile to the golf course. In the meantime Josie was frantically looking for them. A couple drove by the house



The Bilinski Family. Back Row, Left to Right: John Bilinski, Elsie Gordey, Adeline Woloszyn, Josephine Madsen, Tony Bilinski. Front Row: Mrs. Frances Bilinski.

and asked if Josie was looking for 2 little kids. They told her where the kids could be found. When Josie got the kids home and was putting Linda to bed, Philip decided to hop on his trike and go on another tour. She found him on the step of the post office. Josie was sure glad when that day was over.

Later they moved to Wanham in the fall of 1952, onto the lot next to the Bethel Chapel Church. Dorothy Ann was born shortly after on November 8, 1952, at Sexsmith, Alberta.

In 1953, while Bill was logging, he had a very bad run-in with a log, which nearly took his life. He was on compensation a full year. In 1954 he bought his land northeast of town. This year another girl, Elizabeth Jane,



Bill and Josie Krishka's Wedding. Left to Right: Bill Wozniak, Bruno Zalinski, Bill Krishka, Josie, Cecile Wozniak, Christina Hawrylenko.

came onto the scene September 25, 1954. Then he worked on the railroad for a while, under foreman Pete Kushneryk.

In 1955, they sold the house in town and bought the Edey house on the hill. This year Bill stayed home and farmed and did improvements on the land. In the winter of 55/56 he worked for Rottackers, falling logs around Grande Prairie. In the spring another daughter stuck her nose out to the sunshine. On May 27, 1956, Alayne Joan,

was born at Spirit River.

In the spring of 1957, Bill started work in Grimshaw at a garage. He worked there till September 7, 1957, when he died from carbon monoxide poisoning at work.

Josie had a time trying to cope with 5 small children alone. A year and a half later she lost her father, Joseph Bilinski. That summer she helped her mother in the restaurant. During the time of helping in the cafe, she met Irvend Madsen. Irvend Madsen was born on March 30, 1919, at Esbjerg, Denmark. He came to Canada at 12 years of age, to Saskatchewan, where the family first set up farming on poor land. Then they moved to Manitoba, where some of the brothers and sisters still are. They farmed in the Swan River area.

Irvend was in the army and saw active duty in France and Germany. He came into this area (Belloy) where he chose his land and left. Then he came back into the country again the same time as the Ken Bothams and Bill Morrells in 1950.



*The Krishka Children.
Back Row: Philip and
Linda. Front Row:
Dorothy, Alayne and
Elizabeth.*

NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

Irvend and Josie's first date was the New Year's Eve dance at Belloy. About 4 months later he proposed to her at 7:00 in the morning on the main street of Wanham. They tied the knot on July 18, 1960, at the little church in Belloy. Irvend got so excited while he was waiting for his



Josie and Irvend Madsen's Wedding.

bride, he started off to see what was taking so long. He was sent back, knowing they were on the way out the door.

They started their new life on the farm northeast of Belloy. Irvend brought a house from across the Lassiter project for their new home. It needed some work so we were all doing our part. Philip, being the only boy, got his own room. He figured he should paint right away. Irvend said no, so Philip sassed him back and the war was on. Philip went racing down the road with Irvend right behind him. But Irvend couldn't catch him so he threw his hammer and went back to the house to cool off.

The summer of 1962 Irvend and Josie were in the hospital together. Irvend had a stroke and was recuperating, while Josie came in to have their only child, Sandra Gail, on September 24, 1962. When Josie brought Sandy home from the hospital, all the kids couldn't wait to see her. It was the last day of school and when Beverly Morrell got home she jumped on her bike to come to see Sandy. She never got to see Sandy that day because she hit a rut coming down the hill and fell off her bike, breaking her arm. Instead of seeing Sandy, she went to see the doctor.

When Sandy was about 2, Pete and Wilma Murray came to visit. David and Sandy were outside playing when everyone heard this terrible noise. They all looked out the window and there was Sandy sitting on top of David. She was bouncing his head up and down on the ground.

We had a cow and calf, so Irvend put up some straw and hay bales. The kids built a house in the straw bales. It was too dark, so they put some light in it. But it was one big mistake to add light 'cause they burned down every last bale there was!

In 1964 Philip and Linda brought home trophies from the School Divisional trackmeet - top athletes in the division. Linda also brought home the trophy for the best under 15.

Irvend had to go out to Edmonton to have a heart operation. When he got home he farmed a little longer, but he felt he couldn't farm properly so he sold to Bill Morrell. From the farm, they moved to Wanham and fixed up the old pool hall into a restaurant. They kept this



Great Grandmother Bilinski with her grand daughter Linda Murray and great grandchildren Anna-Lynne, Travis and Jordan.

business going from 1967 - 1970.

In 1970 Irvend moved to Grande Prairie and worked for Bill Morrell feeding hogs.

In 1971 he came back to Wanham and helped Pete Murray on the farm. He always worked too hard and long. On a hot summer day, August 1, he had a heart attack out at the farm and died there.

Philip is now in Grande Prairie doing well, carpentering for Solheim and Haugen. He married Glenda Carol Hovdebo from Sexsmith. They have 2 daughters: Tracey Lee, September 12, 1975; Tammy Lynn, October 21, 1977.

Linda married a local boy, Ervin Keith Murray. They farm the Fred Bohnke land and have 3 children: Anna-Lynne Frances, February 24, 1969; Travis Dean, October 4, 1973; Jordan Alan, March 8, 1976.

Dorothy married David Alexander Budnick from Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan. They are living in southern Alberta with one daughter, Donica Arron, born May 8, 1976.

Elizabeth married William Talbot White from Teepee Creek. They farm there and are always involved in the stampede (behind the scenes). They have 4 children: Troy William, May 3, 1971; Trevor Lloy, June 6, 1973; Brent Lee, November 29, 1975; Malissa Nina, December 13, 1978. They lost their second son, Blaine Gordon, who was born 3 months premature on February 3, 1972. He lived 4 days.

Alayne married Alan Carins Cunningham from Devon, Alberta. They are residing in Wanham for now. They have 2 daughters: Valerie Anne, December 7, 1977; Brandy Laurel, July 12, 1979.



Roy and Kay Krogh. Roy was one of the settlers on the project. They are now living in Parksville, B.C.

THE LAMPERTS

by Delphine Mary Lampert

Mom first taught in Wanham in 1922 after taking one year of normal school in Edmonton. She met dad in Grande Prairie (was teaching there at the time) and they eventually married there on August 5, 1928. They lived in Edmonton until mom received her B.A. degree in 1930. They then moved back to Prestville and homesteaded until the middle 1930's. They moved to Wanham to settle for many years. During those years dad was active on the Board of Trade. Mom served a couple of terms on the school board.

In 1952, after years of retirement, mom went back teaching in Wanham school. After teaching two more years there, Mom and Dad moved to Grande Prairie until 1955 where Mom taught for a couple of years in the Grande Prairie high school. She then returned to the University of Alberta where she taught English while completing the course of studies for her Master of Arts. In 1957 she became principal of an elementary school in Grande Prairie. In 1959 she moved down to Vancouver where she taught as English Department head at Sir Winston Churchill High school until her retirement in 1970. Her last years were spent travelling with the homebase of Vern's house in Kamloops.



Laura Lampert was active in education all her life. She served in Wanham as a teacher and School Board member. She later taught in Grande Prairie and B.C.

I think it was in 1956 that Dad ran for the N.D.P. in Grande Prairie constituency. In 1957 he returned to the old home in Wanham where he looked after his various farming operations. Vern left school in 1952 to work on the oilrigs in Saskatchewan. He returned to Calgary where he completed a course in aeronautical mechanics at the Calgary Technical School in 1957 and an automotive mechanics course in 1962. He worked in Calgary until moving to Kamloops in 1970.

I, Delphine, graduated from Grade 12 in 1954 in Wanham. I worked in a Grande Prairie bank for 6



Marking the first time a formal graduation banquet was held at Wanham, these graduates were feted by their community. Peggy Gulick Margaret Christensen, Sheena Sawers, Joan Sather, John Richter, Mary Richter, Delphine Lampert and Alaire Martin.

months, then took a business course at the Grande Prairie Business College in 1955. After working 3 months for the Assessment Branch in Grande Prairie, I went to Edmonton to take a 6 month course in Lab. and X-Ray. I worked for one year at the Grande Prairie Hospital then returned to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton to complete my Registered Technologist certificate in 1958. In January, 1959, I moved to Nanaimo, B.C.



Clare (Lampert) and Art Aune now living in Grande Prairie.

LAMPERTS

Clarence John Lampert was born in Rice, Minnesota on February 26, 1894.

Laura Evelyn Ford was born in Francis, N.W.T. (now Saskatchewan) on August 10, 1905.

They had three children:

Clare Eleanor Lampert born on March 20, 1931, at the Grande Prairie Hospital.

Vernon Lewis Lampert born on January 15, 1934, at the Grande Prairie Hospital.

Delphine Mary Lampert born on April 27, 1937, at the Grande Prairie Hospital.

Laura Evelyn Lampert passed away on June 23, 1979 in Kamloops, B.C.

Clarence John Lampert died on August 29, 1969 in Wanham.

THE LANCASTERS

by Max Lancaster

I was second man at UGG No 1 and 2 in Grimshaw from early March to early November in 1959. About the first week in November, travelling Superintendent M.M. (Buck) Bakken came to the elevator and offered me the elevator in Belloy.

So that weekend we went over to Belloy and met the agent, Gowen Moxley, and his wife. We decided to take the elevator as it would mean a house for about \$35.00 a month and a raise in wages of about \$50.00, making it \$245.00 a month, if I remember correctly.

The next time I saw Belloy was, I think, about a week later on a very cold Monday morning as we started the "cut off" (weighing all the grain). In order to do this all grain had to be handled twice in order to get it over the scales. This took two weeks.

The elevator would elevate grain at about 1000 bushels per hour compared to 2500 per hour in the one at Grimshaw. Also, the elevator was low so the grain didn't get enough "momentum" to reach the end of a boxcar. So, I could figure on about 2 1/2 to 4 hours to load a 2000 bushel box with wheat as I had to stop elevating and shovel the grain back in the car. I never had to shovel grain in Grimshaw so it took about 1 to 1 1/2 hours to load a car of grain. This was just one of many problems that I was to face over the next 5 1/2 years.

The last weekend in November, 1959, I had a grain truck move our belongings to Belloy from Grimshaw. We had a 1955 Chev 2 door car in which I brought my very pregnant wife, Doris, and our three little girls: Sharon (6 years), Joan (5 years), and Brenda (3 years).

We were also to discover our first Belloy chinook. The weather was quite mild that Saturday, November 27, and although we had about a foot of snow, it all but disappeared the following week.

During the time we made the "cut off" I slept in the elevator office which was as cold as a "screen house". I boarded with the Oulletts - Joe, Madeline, and their 2 children, Hilda and Bert.

On Monday morning, November 29th, I carried Sharon with her little lunch kit in hand over to the road and put her on the school bus. She went to school in Wanham for the next 5 1/2 years. The next fall Joan went to school with her and two years later Brenda joined them.

After putting Sharon on the bus I went over to the elevator and was confronted by every farmer and trucker in the country many times in the next week - until the elevator was plugged and the quotas were filled.

The next major event in our family was the birth of our

youngest daughter, Laura Eve, on March 12, 1960. On that day in Peace River we bought a new car, a red Vauxhall. To this day, it's the only new car we ever had.

I can't remember the dates, but one cold fall morning the general store in Belloy burned to the ground. This was a great loss to the whole community, but on the bright side, the Lewis family, who owned the store, escaped with their lives thanks to a young neighbor who drove by and noticed the fire.

The next summer after the fire, I believe, United Grain Growers built us a new house which we lived in for about two years before we left Belloy and the employ of U.G.G. in March, 1965.

We enjoyed our stay at Belloy. There are memories that I will always cherish. For instance, the water supply for the house was a cistern in one corner of the basement. When we moved into the house the cistern was dry. I had no way of hauling water and didn't know where there was any water. I had grain to buy and I stayed in the elevator from twelve to fourteen hours a day that first week. However, when I got home after nine that night, Doris informed me that someone had come and filled the cistern. I never did find out who it was, but that was just typical of the people from around Belloy.

THE LANE FAMILY HISTORY

by Cecile Lane

Timothy E. Lane was born in Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire in 1916. He came to Canada in 1934, going directly to Rochester Alberta. Tim worked on Will Dickison's farm there, with hopes of acquiring his own homestead. Seven years after his entry into Canada, Tim joined the Canadian Army and returned to England. He served in England, Italy and Holland for four years. When he was discharged in September, 1945, he came back to Alberta. He then started to work in a coal mine in a small town, Carbondale, about fourteen miles north of Edmonton.

Tim met his future wife, Cecile Caouette, (who lived on the Vervynck Dairy Farm) and they were married on April 22, 1946. Before that time, Cecile worked for her step-father, helping the family look after a herd of 45 Holsteins during the war years. Tim continued to work at the coal mine after they were married, until the miners went on strike, which lasted for quite some time. During the strike, Roland Caouette, (Cecile's brother) and Tim learned of some new land in Northern Alberta that was being cleared and broken for veterans to settle on. It was known as the Lassiter Project, because a fellow by the name of Lassiter had been hired by the government to open the land for farming.

Roland and Jennie Caouette, who had been married in England during the war, had since settled in Carbondale. Tim and Roland made application for homesteads, and in the spring of 1949, made their first trek to Belloy to begin a new life on the farm.

They had shipped a tractor, harrows, a seed drill and furniture via the N.A.R. which came directly to Belloy.

The new farmers had driven directly to Watino from Carbondale, which was not that easy. Here they had to leave the car, as they had come to the end of the road. To

reach their designated homestead, S.E. 1/2 29-77-8, they continued on foot. About half way, Tim and Roland came across a heap of junk that had been discarded by Lassiter's crews. They noticed a 5' x 8' wooden box which they immediately decided would be their first home, for the next few weeks anyway. Tim and Roland remember spending a lot of time at their neighbor's, the Fred Kozeluks, where they were treated as members of the family.

Approximately a month later, Cecile and her two small children, Daniel - 2 years and Yvonne - 8 months, and Jenny Caouette, with her daughter, Pauline moved north to be with their husbands.

Life for both families, especially a city girl from England was mighty different. Their first home was two granaries built side by side, one as a kitchen, the other as a bedroom. The two families shared these living quarters with squirrels, chipmunks and mosquitoes. Roland and Tim picked roots, worked the land, and harvested together, that fall. Cecile and Jenny did their best to care for their babies and fed their husbands with what little they had. They had become intrigued with a good looking bachelor, Bill Feniak, who had moved in nearby.

Caouettes had a new addition to their family at this time, Paul, and moved to their new home, two miles north, two miles east and half a mile south of Belloy. By that time, Roland's land had been cleared and was ready for next year's crop.

A veteran neighbor, Joe Kennedy, who had applied for land across the Burnt River helped Tim build his house which Tim and Cecile moved into that fall. (They lived in that same house until 1978). Both families moved back to Carbondale for the next two winters. In December, 1950, the Lanes became proud parents of another daughter, Vivian Alice.

KIDS TAKE OFF

Back on the homestead the following summer, the two families settled in to farm full time. Tim bought a second hand binder, and with Roland's help, proceeded to take it apart and repair it. Meanwhile, their two little kids, Pauline and Danny wanted to help. They picked up all the loose parts, put them in their little red wagon, and dumped them in the nearby creek. After being reprimanded Danny and Pauline decided to run away from home. They were going to Rycroft to buy some gum!

For about five years in a row, due to almost every kind of weather condition possible, frost, wind, drought, flood, etc., Tim never managed to harvest any great amount of grain. The winter of 1953, Tim decided he had to leave farm and family and get a job with Texaco Oil, near Dawson Creek. Cecile remembers long, cold, lonely winter, feeding stock and having to leave her small children in the house to care for themselves. Even though times were hard, they always had three square meals a day and no serious injury or illness ever occurred to any of the family.

In the spring of 1952, Tim's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lane, came to live with him and help him farm, until his father's death in 1956. Cecile

remembers the day her father-in-law arrived on the farm. His very first comment to her was, "I say, the sun is actually shining out here, this far north!"

Then in 1953, Godfrey (known in Belloy as Sandy) Powell and his wife Dorothy, (Tim's sister) came to Belloy to be with their family and try their hand at farming. They purchased one quarter section from Lawrence Scott, across the road from Tim's. Sandy also worked for the Scott brothers in their garage in Belloy. In 1957, they purchased land in Pouce Coupe, and moved there with their two daughters, Shirley and Patricia and Tim's mother. Grandma Lane passed away in 1960 in the Pouce Coupe Hospital.

In 1953, because of no school bus in our area, Danny, Pauline and Ailene Shumard, (neighbors) started school in a boarding school in Rycroft with The Sisters of Service. After Christmas that same year, a school bus was allocated for our district so Danny and Ailene were able to attend school in Wanham.

The Lane family increased during the next few years. Janice was born in January, 1955, Michael in December, 1959, and Tina in August, 1965.

MOM LEARNING TO DRIVE

Tim's first car in the Peace Country was a Model A Ford purchased from Ken Waters, the Case dealer in Wanham. One day Cecile and her two oldest children tried to navigate the creek bank just north of the farmstead. The car powered out halfway up the bank. In her excitement, Cecile stepped on the clutch instead of the brakes, making the car back down the hill much faster. It went off the bridge at the bottom of the hill, landing on a large clump of dirt, which saved it from falling in the creek. Later that day, Danny remarked to his grandparents, "Well, you know, Mom is just learning to drive."

In the year 1963, Tim, Cecile and family tried their hand at a small dairy. They milked twenty Holsteins, selling milk locally and the bulk of their cream to the N.A.D.P. in Grande Prairie.

Since 1967, when Tim started working for the Department of Highways, he has farmed part-time in the summer. He is now employed full time with the Department of Highways, and has sold some land and rents some to his son-in-law, Wally Sinkevich.

Tim and Cecile are now proud grandparents of eleven grandchildren. They are: Tamara and Byng Giraud, Tracey Michelle and Trina Dawn Lane, Paul Warren, Debra Leigh and Angélique Sinkevich, Kendra Christie Jacobsen, and Jeanine Lynette, Klair Semone and Lorriann Peters.



EARL LANG

submitted by Ruth (Lang) Littman

Earl, I and Donna arrived in Wanham April 18, 1956. We shipped all our belongings by train from Beiseker. We arrived here with a three ton truck, a cow and calf and a palomino horse. Since our house wasn't available



The Lang family - Ruth, Earl, Donna, Debbie, Darlene and Larry.

yet, (Chris Weis was having a sale on April 24, 1956) we stayed with my cousin, Pastor Laverne and Ruth Krenzler.

Henry Wunch helped us unpack the boxcar and flat deck. John Wendland brought us a supply of chop to get started, for which we were very thankful.

The weed inspector told us that we'd have to wash the machinery with diesel, because of the weeds, but somehow we got around that. Seeing all the "thistle" growing so abundantly east of Wanham, our efforts would have been in vain.

Earl and I belonged to the Alberta Flying Farmers. We enjoyed having other "Flying Farmers" attend the "fly-ins" at Peoria. Raising and showing Arabians was another of Earl's favorite hobbies.

I am the proud owner of one trophy from the plowing match. One year I beat Grant McEwan in the stooking match and also won the horse shoe match the first year.

We have four children. Donna is married to Bernie Reising, and lives in Peoria. Richelle and Trevor are their family.

Debbie is married to Doug Tetz, grandson of Albert Tetz, who taught school in Peoria. They have two children, Mandy and Stephen, and live in Lacombe.

Darlene is married to Troy Basaraba. They live in Williams Lake, B.C. where Darlene is employed by the Gov't Assessment Office, while Troy works for Jacobson's Lumber Co.

Larry lives in Sherwood Park, with his dad and Cis, where he is taking grade nine. He enjoys playing hockey, rollerskating and skiing.

Earl and I were divorced in 1976. At present I am married to Elvin Littmann. We live at Dippy Dew Dairy Farm, ten miles east of Peoria.

Earl is married again and lives in Sherwood Park. (Edmonton) He farms some land at Mundare, east of Edmonton.

We are happy to see a new church going up in Peoria. We attended the other one since 1956.

Even a church has its funny as well as serious side. Once Irving Reiswig was to read a Mission story in front of the congregation. Looking to the back, who did he see but Earl Lang and Orville Berg looking at him. He immediately lost his voice, and his knees were knocking on the pulpit. He quietly walked out the side room; and since there was no other way out where no one would see him, he chose the window, made a leap, and walked home.

Don't give up Irving, we all feel like doing the same thing sooner or later!



Left to Right: Bill Laughy Sr. and Bud Metz.



Jack Laughland's first homestead shack - 1928.

THE LAUGHLAND CLAN

submitted by Wilfred Laughland

Dave, Wilfred, George and Alex all homesteaded in the Peace River country south of Wanham. I, Wilfred - better known as Jack, came here after spending eighteen months in the trenches in World War I. I came on the old steamer train in 1923 and filed on S.W. 33-76-2. These were the days of homesteading, living on moose meat and potatoes. We didn't have much money but it seems we did not need much, and we had lots of time to do what had to be done. I have seen a big change in this country since I homesteaded here, and all change has been for the good.

I like the country and the people here. Today I live in Rycroft and all the other brothers have gone.

N.B. Jack Laughland married Florence Margaret Ormiston in Spirit River on September 5th, 1935. Born to this marriage were one daughter, Jackie, and one son, Harvey.



Dave and Sandy Laughland at the junction of Bad Heart and Smoky - 1929.

AS I REMEMBER

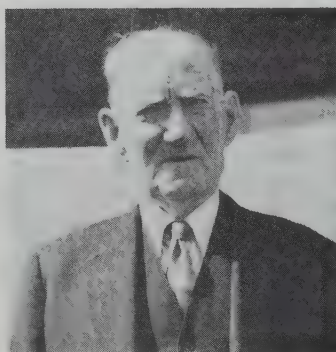
submitted by Lawrence J. Laughy

I've often thought of writing something about the years I've lived here in Wanham. To try to write about all of the things I might be obliged to write about, it seems to me I would have to have a lot of time, and probably a lot of paper. The number of things that have happened to me ... just to me without adding anyone is almost endless.

Beginning in 1928, and following through until now, December of 1980, is a long time. A lot of water has run under the proverbial bridge during that time.

I recall the first trip I ever made into the Wanham area. Actually I don't think it was a trip meant for Wanham necessarily, but a car trip which was going to take place anyway. A friend of ours by the name of "Eb Showers," was going to take my mother down to see my dad at the "Fox Creek" road camp on Highway 49. William (Bill) Laughy was highway foreman working out of Grande Prairie, Alberta under A.H. McQuarrie, highway engineer. My dad's duties began at the original "Roycroft" corner which is where the transformer now stands at the south east corner of "Rycroft," on Highway No. 2. The "o" was dropped from the name, "Roycroft" some time later and became "Rycroft, Alberta.

We left Clairmont, (where we lived) in high spirits really looking forward to the trip. Having nothing to do that day, I was invited to go along. It was a beautiful morning as the three of us piled into a 1928 Chev. touring car. Oh! it was a wonderful thing. And the thrill of it.



W.F. Laughy



Mary E. Laughy

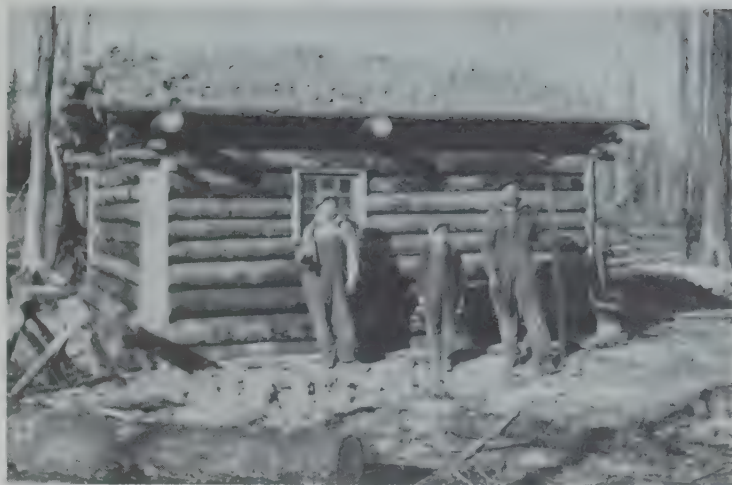
The thrill of those cars was different than it is today. You get into a car today and you expect the thing to go. You paid plenty for it. You're a big shot, and this thing had better perform. In those days it was quite different. The miracle that it worked at all just left you enthralled mile after mile. The miles seemed longer those days too, because you were never quite sure how long your car would last.

Heading north we were soon out of sight over Mercer's Hill. It was not long before we passed through Sexsmith. Next we passed the flour mill. Continuing north we arrived at the four mile corner. Turning east we soon came to the famous artesian well which flowed continuously. A short distance further on, the road turned north once more, this time we drove right up into the "Burnt Hills," (now called Saddle Mountain.) Everything was burned, it was not a pretty sight, but a great place to get fire wood. Going down the north side of Saddle Mountain was a cinch, but from the foot of the hill it was a nightmare. Ruts filled with water, roots and pot holes were the order of the day. After a great deal of soul searching as to whether we should go on or not, we arrived at Rycroft Corner.

I'll always remember coming to that corner. The only sign of road construction was one furrow ... just one furrow down the south side of the trail. This "ditch" was a big deal and was supposed to get rid of all the water. We drove east to the rim of the Burnt River Valley. We could see nothing ahead but space. We got out of the car to see if it was possible to go on. We were faced with a 90 degree turn to the right, and down at a steep angle there was a trail for wagons cut into the bank. We were in luck again because it was wide enough for the car. The drive down across a little bridge and up the other side was a hair raising experience but we made it. On top now, we drove a short way south to the correction line and once again drove east.

We would have to drive east about five miles on the correction line. There were so many places I recall so vividly. The timber was so close to the car it scared you. There was just a trail through there ... that was all. It was just good common sense to carry along an axe and a cross cut saw, because if you got hung up you were in trouble, and helpers were few and far between. Ahead the trail turned south over a hill; a half a mile later we turned east on the section line. From our instructions and mileage we knew our trip was coming to an end. We sped on now with anticipation. The road was better now. This was where the actual work was being done. We felt good. The first mile passed, then we had gone five miles, then ten, and then - wow! there ahead was the road camp. We had arrived. There was the camp, setting in a lovely clearing almost surrounded by majestic spruce. The trees so beautiful, and this whole country was filled with them.

We got out of the car and walked up to the tent where we were met by Albert Olsen, "The Cook" ... a very important person. Albert was soon busy making lunch for us. A lunch anywhere those hard years was something special, but what stands out in my mind of that particular lunch was the homemade bread. What else was on the table didn't matter. It was very good and to this day I have appreciated it after that trip. We sat down and I



Russell Laughy, Buddy Metz and Roy Laughy.

couldn't believe what I saw. Here was a loaf of bread, I don't know how it was made or why it was made the way it was. Obviously it was made in a pot of some kind. It was not only huge but it was round. Albert just cut a slab off the way you would cut a slab off a tree. This slice would just plop over the entire size of your plate. By the time you have buttered that slice you were ready to devour it I tell you because the smell of that new bread was almost overwhelming. The size of those slices has remained a fond memory of mine. Later that afternoon after a pleasant and informative visit, we left the camp to start our return trip.

WANHAM, ALBERTA

Driving west we came back to the corner again. There was a little school house a bit south of the turn, sitting comfortably on the "South Slope." North now over the hill. To the east of the corner where the trail turned west was a community hall. The building just sat there, but seemed to be telling us in a quiet unpainted way that there was a little hamlet down there and maybe we had better drop in. That is just what we did. We soon realized that "Wanham, Alberta" was a typical small hamlet and the street bore the inevitable signs of horse drawn vehicles. As we drove along we noticed on the left, or west side of the street, a log house a fair distance back from the road. In answer to our question we were told it belonged to a Mr. and Mrs. Leriger. On further down was the Frontier Lumber Co., and the Wanham Mercantile. These two businesses were new, and had only recently been opened. The Wanham Mercantile was owned by E.J. Harrington, who also had an agency for the International Harvester Machinery Company. About one hundred feet north was an old building which was supposed to have been a cell block of years past. Next was Prevost's Lumber yard, and beside it, the Prevost Family House. Near the railroad tracks, but still on the south side was a fairly new log house. This was the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Baker, (later owned by J.C. Lampbert). East of the trail, and north of the tracks was the station. This was a small shack with a bench along each of two walls and a pot-bellied heater. In one corner was an arm full of wood which had been split, probably by the section crew. Oh

yes, there was a smaller building at the back - much smaller. There had been a moon crescent cut into the door, to supply a little light I suppose. Both buildings were beautifully painted in Dead Red. We turned back up the street, but first we wished the little buildings which belonged to the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway, plenty of business for which they were intended.

Back up the street we spotted another small log house. This one belonged to Ed. Harrington, whose homestead it was. This parcel of land was only a fraction of a quarter section. The other fraction of this parcel was north of the tracks and was later filed on by Charles Geller. Ed's land, in turn was sold to Nels Jacobsen. Next was a new hotel under construction, then Pete Tansem's General Store and Meat Market. A.D. ST. Pierre's Bakery and Confectionary was next, followed by Ralph Pickard's Blacksmith Shop. Right beside it was the house. Ralph's brother Olly lived there with him, also their mother. Now back to the corner where we turned west again. The community hall retreated into the distance in the rearview mirror. For the Wanham area we knew, it was a silent sentinel.



*Road Crew
south of
Wanham in
1928. Joe
Meyer, Ed
Fortier, Dave
Fortier, Ole
Tansem, and
Bill Laughy.*

ROAD BUILDING

Now that the road crews had joined at Fox Creek on Highway 49, the road allowance was clear and passable from Rycroft to Watino. New instructions were to move the camp to the Wanham corner. Albert did not wish to move with the camp so it was necessary to find a new cook.

At this time of year most homesteaders were very busy trying to get a few acres under cultivation, so to get help to work on the road was a difficult chore. It was decided that my mother, Mary E. Laughy, would do the cooking. A cook car was sent out from Grande Prairie. It was spotted over Ramsfield's hill, (now Sather's hill) at a location opposite the shack of Hans Mortensen. Probably a mile and a half on the road to Peoria Corner. Here my mother took over the cooking duties.

I joined the crew at "Han's" camp. We started to clear the right of way from the foot of the hill where the present highway intersection is. It was tough going, believe me. First the trees had to be removed, and there were lots of them. The tree stumps had to be blasted. My job was to work with the powder man, "Fred." He really understood blasting powder and I learned a lot from him. This experience was to serve me in good stead at a later time, when I was called on to blast the stumps from the

homestead of E.J. Harrington.

By the time we had the right of way cleared down the south slope and on to the camp the land was getting low, while the ground was damp and had the smell of a swamp. Our problem here was not timber, but water. The ditching and draining began. We had to be sure before we moved on, that the ground was solid enough for wagon travel. Day by day, we inched south. After a lot of work we moved to a site at the foot of the south hill. The clearing where we put the cook car was just like a small park. There were spruce scattered about and wild "Tiger Lillies" everywhere. This property would become the homestead of Mr. Joe Hauser, and his family.

At this place we were working in the willows. Such a nice smell would rise each time the ground was disturbed. This had to be our reward for all the mosquitoes, smoke and grime we had just put up with.

Men and horses worked very hard, and the days were long. I remember Lester Olsen best of all. He was teamster for Ole Tansem. We became good friends. The team he drove was "Darby and Queen," and they were really something. Ole was very proud of them and so was Lester. There were many other teams. The ones I remember were my dad's as well as those belonging to Walter Smith, and of course, Darby and Queen. These three teams I have mentioned were large and powerful. Individually these animals weighed 2000 lbs. or more.

The road work went on, not over the hill, but around it on the east side. and was destined to remain that way for years to come.

"BLACK McDOUGAL"

The balance of 1928 passed, then 1929. In 1930, I helped my brother-in-law and my sister Frances, move to their new cabin north of Wanham. We came down in a 1928 Ford truck. The memory is still fresh. We drove down the main street in Wanham and again I was back at the railroad tracks. This time there were three of us. The owner and driver of the truck, George Parzy, Bob Metz and myself. We crossed the track, and with the help of axe and shovel we built an approach so we could get the truck up on to the road allowance on the north side of the railroad grade ditch. The time of year was fall, so we encountered no water problem. We crept north along a trail that was so narrow we ripped the spare tire off the side of a truck box that was only six feet wide. In approximately a half mile we came to the log house standing in solid timber on the west side of the right of way. A man by name of "Black McDougal" was the builder.

McDougal put up several houses, shacks and barns in this area. He used three different corner methods of which I am aware. They were the Hudson Bay, Crotch and Saddle and the Dove Tail. The first two types were easy and quick to do. Because of this, they were very popular.

In the quick method of building, there was always a gap between the logs. It was necessary to close this opening up well so that your cabin would be nice and warm in the winter. A preferred method was to take spruce moss (which grew deep everywhere in the forest.) and force it solidly into these cracks. Next take saplings

and split them with a saw. Now take the round side of this slat and place in the natural seat where the moss and logs came together. Nail these pieces in to stay and you could end up with a very warm house. Inside we made a paste of flour and water which had been cooked until it was clear. Mix this with sawdust; plaster the cracks with this mixture and it not only made a good job, but was practically the same colour as the logs.

At the same time that Bob Metz filed on his homestead, his wife, Frances filed on the quarter opposite on the east side of the right of way, while my brother, Roy filed on the quarter directly north of Bob's land. Pete Tansem had already filed on the quarter north of Frances Metz, and opposite my brother's land. This accounted for all four quarter sections at the intersection one mile north of the corner on which stood Wanham's first hotel. Later Pete cancelled this quarter in favour of M.E. Laughy.

The first thing that Roy did was build a tiny shack so he would be able to put in his residence duties. In a short while he knew he was not meant to be a homesteader. This resulted in his cancellation application in favour of my dad. Eventually it became the home place for the Laughy family.



Ed Randolph, William Laughy, Mrs. Randolph, Sr., Mrs. Ed Randolph, Mary E. Laughy, Keith Randolph, Laverne Randolph, and Betty Randolph.

In the log house located on Bob's place, the Metz's raised four children. Ethel, Bud, Frannie and Robbie were the names their friends knew them by. This house still stands and continues to be a weekend retreat for their children and grandchildren.

Now we move north to the intersection, and by going north of the survey peg about one hundred yards, then west for about two hundred yards, we stood on the spot where we would build our permanent home.

Since the little shack was already there, we decided to make an additional temporary shelter before we built the house. While this was being done, some of us stayed at Metz's. (Camp No. 1) I'm not going into all of the details, but what we finally had was a skeleton (made of poles) similar to that of a granary with no sheeting. As the logs were cut for the permanent structure, they were peeled and the bark from each tree was used to close our skeleton in, roof and all. When finished it was a lovely

bark shack, almost white inside. With three or four layers of bark everywhere, it was truly a formidable bulwark against the weather. We had to work quickly while placing the bark because it's drying time was not long, but when dry was very strong.

"OLD KING"

Our house was finally under way. It was clear from the start that forty-four foot green logs did not go up on the walls easily, so we borrowed "Old King" from Pete Tansem. After awhile, house building became hum-drum unless you were using King. Old King was a chubby, truly intelligent horse. In a nut shell, we placed him on the opposite of the foundation to the building logs. A long, strong rope was brought into play. To a stump or peg provided for this purpose, directly behind King, the rope was fastened. The other end of the rope was taken across the ground logs to the first building log. Wrapping the log around two or three times, the rope was then returned to be pulled snug, tied solid to King's single tree. Preparation to put that first large log in place was complete except for the skids. These were two small logs. These were placed with the small ends under the building log about twenty feet apart. The large end was under scored to fit the ground log, making a ramp for the log to roll up, on its way to becoming part of the wall. Before speaking to King, it was necessary to have a strong person at the small end of the log which was to be rolled up the skidway. The large end of the log would gain so fast when it started to roll, that the person who was placed there had to slide the end upward so the log arrived at the top of the skid evenly.

"King, step up Boy," and King would take one step. This signal was repeated over and over until finally the log had been rolled up the skids and thumped over on to the end logs. The end logs were much shorter than the side ones and were easily rolled up by hand. During the balance of the job we found that by stretching the word "step" as far as possible, we could make King take three or four steps at one time. But when the word step ended, King stopped.

To work with "Old King," could be a pleasure or a tragedy. The secret was whether you tried to drive him or let him have his way. All of our house logs were raised without anyone touching the reins. If you were working him by himself, and left him to his own discretion, he was a pleasure to watch. I saw him skid moose out of willow breaks and river bottoms with absolute ease, if left alone. On the other hand if you were driving him on a bald quarter section with one rose bush in the centre, he would be thoroughly tangled in no time. In this sort of situation, there would be only one way out. Coil the lines up and hang them on the hames; step back a few feet and say, "King! Take 'er out of there!"

Those of our family who called our house "home," were of course, Mother and Dad, then Roy who died in the Armed Service, myself, Russell, Virgil, Wilbur (Bill), and Elvira. Virgil, Bill and Vira, as well as those at Camp No. 1, walked to South Slope School as well as home again. There was always a dog out at the corner to meet them.

Our home was a very happy place. We held our mother and dad in the highest esteem. I don't believe any one of us would intentionally ever do anything to hurt them. They loved their family in the true sense. There was much poverty in the early days. I can remember saying that if a day ever arrived when we would have enough food for the next day, free from worry, then we would indeed have found ... Shang-re-la! Even under those conditions we knew great happiness. Another joy to remember was the number of wonderful persons, both young and old who visited our home. I still believe they played a large part in our survival of a very difficult time.

I am not sure of the dates here, but between 1931 and 1935, trips into town disclosed many things. For instance the large number of "salt pork slabs" piled like cord wood in front of the counter in Pete Tansem's store. A little while later this same store became the switch board site for a local telephone line into the south country. One Saturday morning as I pushed through the store door, Pete waved me to silence. He then rang the person on the end of the line. He knew how many phones were on the line, so when he was satisfied that he had counted enough clicks, he said:

"Good morning everyone! This is your local butcher, and these are the meat specials for today ..."

Many times I have sat quietly and witnessed how A.D. St. Pierre would react to some youngster wanting to buy some root beer. (Made by A.D.) Quickly he would grab a glass and an empty pop bottle. With a clacking sound of his tongue, he made a noise that sounded like the glass was filling right up. While he was pretending to pour from the empty bottle, his eyes were watching the small customer, who, on his first trip in, just stood there looking, trying to figure out why he couldn't see the root beer in the glass. When A.D. was satisfied with the results, he would pour the real stuff to the joy of the customer. Then with a beautiful benevolent gaze over the top of his glasses, he would start laughing - his whole body shaking, his hands clasped over a good sized tummy while one or two buckshot sized pellets of snuff fell from his nose and rolled across the counter and out of sight.

HUNTING KNIFE VERSUS DEER

Also during this time another house had been built on our land, and close to our house. It was built for my sister Josephine, and her husband (Big Ed Randolph) and their three children, Keith, Laverne and Betty. One summer was spent in this house. Then in order to be closer to town, Ed and his family moved to a house located one eighth of a mile north of the tracks, and on the east side of the road allowance. While living there, an unusual thing happened.

Peering out of the window one morning, Big Ed looked down the length of a large tree that had blown down. At the far end of this stood a good sized "Deer." Quickly Ed appraised the situation. The deer was standing in very deep snow, while the log was fairly clean. Grabbing his hunting knife, and hoping the deer was very tired, he raced down the log. Jumping on the deer's back, the animal was brought down with one thrust.

You may ask, why with a knife? Why not shoot it? It will be hard indeed to explain this to a throw-away society. We had to buy our shells ... one at a time. Sometimes we would have more, but generally we'd have two. What a luxury! We could then afford to miss ... Once.

I think it was during the summer of 1933 that we did a corduroy job on our road. Until this time there was no way to go from the tracks to our house unless you walked on the large logs that were placed end to end all the way, or by wagon and team. Even then, sometimes the water would come right into the wagon box. From now on, things would be different.

Logs were cut twelve feet long and were all sizes. Some were two and a half feet in diameter. The largest ones were placed in the slough which was the low spot. The smaller ones were placed according to the land trend. This truly was a big job. Side by side, these logs stretched from about one hundred yards north of the tracks, and further on north to the intersection. Now we could drive - free at last from all the water. To prove a point, I drove Ed Harrington's 1928 coupe from town to our corner. Another milestone had been achieved.

Friends were so important during those years. Pete Nelson, who lived a half mile east of us was one of those. His house had been built by a master axeman, the corners were dove tailed. The logs were hewed inside and out, underscored to fit like a glove. The axeman was a man by the name of Halvor Rudd.

South of Pete Nelson was where Bob Brice set up his family. North of Pete Nelson was where the Elder Metz's built and lived with their family.

With that I think I will wander one more time through town just to see if anything new has been happening.

Sure enough, almost forgotten was the pool hall built by Zac LeMoin, and now being run by Bill Sheedy. A.B.A. Oil office had been set up by Ed Prevost. A new Co-op store had been built. Joe Hauser would soon open his office south of the lumber yard. One more trip up to



Back Row, Left to Right: Bob Metz, William Laughy, Bud Metz. Front Row: Frannie, Francis and Robbie.

the well - that wonderful well where the Ramsfield Brothers were filling their water tank with that lovely water which they sold in Wanham to make their daily bread.

From our house located on Mary E. Laughy's former homestead, today we drive to town on a good gravel road. Each time I drive over it I imagine I can hear the rumble of the logs. They're still under there!

And now a word to Sam. "I've never told our secret."

THRESHING

A normal harvesting crew consisted of probably sixteen teams and bundle racks. To this add four field pitchers, the separator man and the steam engine, or tractor man. The size of the crews at the beginning was not large because of small acreage. By my time, they were larger. The loads of bundles would always drive in on their own side. This was important because the granary was generally on the left side, making the team stand with their faces almost against the wall, as well as listen to the noise from the belts. There were not too many teams that could be trusted to stand still while the driver and one spike pitcher "unloaded," or "pitched off" the bundles into the feeder of the separator.

When speaking of harvesting, an interesting fact always comes to mind. Leonard Metz at one time owned a huge separator which was powered by a huge "Garr-Scott" steam engine. With this outfit ticking, he threshed out in one day, in the Sexsmith area - eleven thousand bushels of oats. This was quite an achievement in those times.

There was also the fun times. I enjoy recalling one such time when Bill Lee was looking for someone to go to work on his threshing crew. Cyril Harrington and I decided to go out for awhile anyway. We realized that we would have to be, or appear to be, tough, so the first thing we did was to buy a box of 'snoose' each. We loaded our gear into the wagon and were soon on our way south. Sitting on the bottom of the box we decided to try chewing a bit. With a very large lump under each of our top lips, we settled back. I couldn't take the stuff, but I must remain tough. I bided my time. While Cyril chewed and swallowed to the bitter end, I very sneakily "spat 'er out" over the tail gate.

I mentioned the field pitchers before. Now I want to mention Angus Macleod. Angus was very tall, as well as big and kind. The first morning we were up at five a.m. and had breakfast. Bill Lee told me to work with Angus. Well, I took one look at that structure and knew that if I was to keep up with him, I would need a bundle fork with two handles on it, and there would have to be a whole lot more of me. It was still black night as we walked to the field. The team would come up as soon as the drivers could see the rows of stooks. Angus and I stood talking in the dark and the cold. Suddenly he put his hand on the top of my head and said, "You just clean up." I was thinking that if I disagreed with him, that big hand might come down, and I could disappear into that good black soil just like a fence post. And so the very large man loaded a stook at a time while the kid cleaned up.

RALPH, THE BLACKSMITH

The blacksmith shop was a popular meeting place and generally quite busy. Actually, it was in one of Ralph's sheds that we stored furniture when we moved to Wanham. (At that time the water was very deep north of the tracks.) Ralph was always shoeing horses or welding with his smelly old carbide outfit. Whatever he was doing, he seemed to work very hard at it. Here was a man! Strong, honest, with a heart the size of a water pail. There was no way in writing that I know of, to explain the kind of person he was. With a wonderful sense of humour, and a laugh that came from the heart, this man radiated friendliness.

I must tell you of a day after he came home with his "store-bought" teeth. He, like so many others, had waited too long, leaving little gum for an anchor. He was busily working in the shop when I came in. His large normal teeth had been replaced with large artificial teeth. Something happened and Ralph let out a roar of laughter. As he turned, I could feel tears of mirth creeping into my own eyes because there was Ralph, laughing his big heart out, his mouth wide open, but his teeth seemed determined to stay clenched!

THE HARNESS SHOP

It would be tragic if I were to overlook the "Harness Shop." In this tiny shop, Al Rogers was the staff. Inside this place it always smelled so good! The evidence of harness making was everywhere. Leather was part of the "Cowboy Attire," so the need to be a cowboy at that



Ethel Metz

time was very strong. In my case, I had no intention of becoming a cowboy. My thinking was that if I had the "cuffs", I would probably fit in anyway. Al agreed to make the cuffs for me, but mentioned that the leather he worked with was not exactly cuff material. Good Heavens! I'll never forget my cuffs. They were made of lovely black and very thick trace leather, and beautifully mounted with silver studs. The bottom edge of the cuffs

seemed hollow ground, similar to the blade of a skate. Every time I put them on I got shaved, scraped, and did a little blood-letting. It was no easy matter putting the cuffs on or taking them off without cutting your veins. They would give no quarter in their determination to remain like a stovepipe. With preserverance and a large tin of "Zam-Buk," I made out O.K.

A SEASON OF FIRES

"What about the fires?" I've been asked that question a number of times and I still don't know if I can answer it, but I'll do my best. As I've already stated, "This country was full of spruce." After the fires, it was a country filled with popular and willow. The homesteaders had no tools to remove the timber with, except axes and saws, and under certain conditions - "Stumping Powder." With a situation such as this, it is easier to understand what a powerful ally fire could be, properly used. Now enter the human error in controlling it, and you have a monster with an insatiable appetite. The stage has been set. I can still see and hear those fires.

The first fires appeared shortly after we settled, and although they were bad, they were controlled. There was smoke everywhere. Some smoke was necessary during warm weather to keep the mosquitoes away from man and beast. In the summer it was impossible to walk to town unless you took a burning root along, and by waving it around your head once in awhile, it was possible to keep those pests at a distance. In the first years, there were all kinds of windfalls burned, and some green timber, but not much.

At that time there were quite a few sloughs, but as the land was cleared, these bodies of water began drying out. The areas were taken over by slough grass which had no value as hay, but because of its abundant growth and height, when dry, became the key factor in starting and spreading most timber fires. The year of the big fire does not register in my mind. I feel it was between 1938 and 1940, but I can not be sure.

This morning there were fires everywhere again and very thick. It was obvious there was a bad day ahead. As time passed, visibility lessened and the sun became red. By this time, the roar could be heard for miles. In most cases it was impossible to see the actual fire. It was the sound of it that brought the perspiration to your forehead. These fires were called top fires and very often would go out after the group of trees it had gotten into would have all the needles burned off. The trouble here was that top fires would send sparks up to five miles with the wind. If a live spark should land in a slough, filled with saw grass, knee deep, you had another problem.

One fire I'll mention in particular, caused us to stay on the roof all night. We took turns up there because it was quite dangerous as well as scary. The burning trees became huge torches in the night. Some of the flares would be burning a few feet from the ground, while others burned thirty to fifty feet above. If a person had any imagination at all, it was very easy to see every time a flame waved or a cloud of smoke sailed by, that those big red eyes were moving toward you. There was no way that

I can explain to you, the feeling of hopeless fear that took over as everything out there in the night continued to move and glare in my direction. About then, and timely, too, someone down below would call, "Come on down for awhile." I remember saying, "Thank God!" To hell with the ladder - I jumped off the roof and dove through the door, and just making it as I thought something sinister was reaching out for me.

The next two days were like a bad dream. More fires were on the way. The lumber mill which had been there for a long time, was located on the side of a hill very near the north line of our home quarter. Everyone there was busy getting ready to evacuate. The horses were getting fretful and very hard to manage. Luckily, in the timber the smoke seemed to float overhead, while out in the yard it almost touched the ground. Visibility was just about nil now. In the house the situation had become almost intolerable. Those inside were already lying on the floor with wet cloths over their faces. Nightfall finally and thankfully came over the area. The atmosphere naturally cooled off in the evening allowing most of us to relax a bit, but one look outside showed hundreds of trees turned once more into torches, just waiting for the sun to rise. Surprisingly, the next morning, the fires were non-existent. I should have said, "We thought they were out." Heaving a sigh of relief, we went about preparing to move the mill out, plus a lot more timber. Leonard Metz and his wife, Clarricy lived in a skid shack. She figured that by the time the mill was moved, she would have plenty of time to bake her bread, taking it out about two p.m. To have this baking done by the time the shack was moved was important because the stove would have to be taken down. About noon the sun was very hot. Here and there fires were springing up. The pace around the camp quickened, but alas! Suddenly a strong wind came up. There was fire, smoke and sparks everywhere. We had about an eighth of a mile to go to safety. Everyone as well as the horses left in a hurry, choked with smoke and passing some open fire. The afternoon was wild and fearful. About two p.m. in the safety zone, Clarricy remarked, "The bread would be done about now!" By evening once again all was quiet. In the morning more than one person shed a tear, yes both the strong and the weak, because everything "but the house," was gone. The mill, 50,000 board feet of lumber, two barns, Randolph's original house and just about everything that surrounded the perimeter of what we called the yard. I cannot overlook this opportunity to mention Roy and Jim Watson. These two men before and after the fires, worked very hard with us and were held in high regard by my mother and father. These two men were the kind of people you really liked to have by your side when you had to get the job done.

"WHERE ARE THE PANCAKES?"

Standing among the trees, I asked Bob, "Where is the kitchen?" Looking up and down and around with tongue in cheek, he answered, "You're standing in it."

I had been hired to cook for twenty men on an open fire. This I had not been told. Upset, I asked, "Where the hell is the stove?" The look on his face was enough, but

to help a bit, he pointed toward the ground. I shouldn't have asked! So, in a forest out in the Peoria District, I set up my stove. I cut two small trees in five foot lengths; hewed them each on three sides, and placed them on the ground with the rounded sides out. At one end the logs were pulled tight together, at the other they were spread about sixteen inches. Next I dug the fire pit. Starting at the wide end I graded the pit until it was twelve inches deep at the point. The dirt was piled to be used when the pits use was over. Now first I put in dry wood. Once there was a good flame, that was the signal to switch to green wood. You cannot cook very well on a flame fire, so you worked with the green until the coals turned white, then the stove was ready. Starting with the coffee pot at the point, then the tea kettle, then the pots and pans according to size. The meal was cooked all at the same time with heat to spare. I learned to build this stove when I was a boy scout. Supper was uneventful. I was told that evening to make hot cakes for breakfast. I told Bob I would cook them but I couldn't mix them. With that I went to bed. There was batter there when I got up in the morning, so I set right in to cook them.

The men were gathering. I had one large platter filled. I called to Bob and the hot cakes were taken away. In good time I had another filled and called Bob. I kept on cooking. No one came for the tray and it was getting too high. A fear came over me and I took a quick look at the table. My worst fears were confirmed! Quietly the fellows had hung my precious hot cakes on every handy tree branch they could reach. The whisky jacks were having a field day. Those pancakes were just like boot leather. Bob told them I had mixed the batter, so it should follow that the looks I got from the gang were anything but friendly.



Left to Right: Russell Laughy, his daughter, Gwen, his mother, Mrs. Laughy, and Irene Laughy.

RUSSELL LAUGHY

by Trudy Switzer

Russell was born December 26, 1915, at Hardisty, Alberta. He moved to the Wanham area with his parents Mr. and Mrs. Bill Laughy in 1931. He left to work in the sawmills at Barrhead in 1937.

Russell returned to Wanham in 1944 with his wife, Irene, and two small children, Harvey and Trudy. In 1948 Doug made his appearance and Gwen in 1954. The family farmed the original Laughy homestead until 1957, at which time they moved to Grande Prairie.



Harvey and Trudy Laughy, 1944.

One night I remember well was a Saturday and Dad had driven Doug and me to town to see a movie. On the way home, we had an accident with the train. The tracks used to be on a bit of a rise and as we drove along we could see the lights of Fairview. Everything looked normal. It wasn't until we were just about on the tracks that we saw the train and realized that we were looking at the lights of Fairview under the boxcars. Mom wrote a poem about what happened that night.

A DAY OF REST

During our school years at Wanham a couple of things come to mind. One sunny warm spring morning I decided that school was not on the top of my list of things I wanted to do that day. We had to walk 1 mile to town to catch the school bus and on this particular day we had gotten a little past the Catholic church when I made up my mind not to go to school. Being a small town and everyone knowing everyone else, it was not easy to find a place to stay out of sight all day. So I ducked into one of those cement culverts to wait for the school bus to leave. As the day went on things got uncomfortable and to say the least a little boring. So I decided to step out and stretch a little and who was the first person I saw coming down the road? My dad! I had forgotten about him being the Dray Man and that he would be hauling the mail and other goods from the railway station into town. So I spent all day in the culvert with Dad driving past me every half hour or so. When I got home that night I knew I would be on the bus every day after that!

Harvey and friends were the first ones to try out the first public swimming pool in Wanham. During lunch hour at school some of the kids used to sneak over to a dam on Sather's property just across the fence from the school yard. (Much against school rules.) This particular day some girls went on this outing with the boys and dared them to go swimming. A dare being something that should be acted upon, despite the lack of swimming suits they had no choice but to strip and dive in, which they did. As soon as the guys hit the water, the girls headed for school looking for a teacher to tell. It didn't take long before they found one. Needless to say, the school took a dim view of this little venture and threatened to expel the boys for the rest of the year and not let them write their exams. (This happened in June.) Due to some kind-



Christmas 1948
- Bud
Ferguson, Vic-
tor Wiegel, and
Russell Laugh-
hy.

hearted school board members, this was waved and the boys finished the school year in a pretty straight-laced style.

Russell is retired and lives in Grande Prairie. Harvey and his family, Russell, Leanne and Taralyn, live at McLure, B.C. Trudy and Gordon (Switzer) and family, Suzanne, Derek and Karyn, are in Grande Prairie. Doug and Judy and family, Duffer and Gordie, are at Debolt. Gwen and Barry (Shkawarok) and family, Darrel and Chris, are also in Grande Prairie. Mrs. Laughy Sr. is living with Gwen and Barry. She is active and enjoying good health. On May 3, 1980, she celebrated her 99th birthday. Bill Laughy Sr. passed away in February of 1948.

In 1928 Bill Laughy was foreman for the crew that built the road south of Wanham, to the Kadot hill. The Laughys returned to Wanham in 1931 to file on a homestead.

THE LITTLE GREY FORD

by Trudy

*The night was black and on the track
A freight train puffed and roared;
With a laugh and a song we rattled along,
Coming home in the little grey Ford.*

*We felt a bump and the thing did jump,
First sideways, then straight back.
Pa shook his head with a look of dread
At what was on the track.*

*With a curse and a shout our Pa jumped out.
On his face was the look of pain.
With a roar so shrill he said, "Sit still.
It looks like we hit the train."*

*Now we thank the Lord that our little grey Ford
Was resurrected from the wreck.
With no bones broke, we thought it a joke -
And we're glad we saved our necks.*

*The police were in town, so they came down
With a look that was awfully bored.
He gazed awhile, then started to smile
At what was left of our Ford.*

*He didn't stay long, just said, "What's wrong?"
With laughter, he started to roar.
Then Pa got mad 'cause he thought it bad
For the police to laugh at our Ford.*

*But it taught us a lesson,
And we're not guessin'
When we cross the tracks in our Ford!*

LEE, NELS AND EVA

by Annie (Lee) Horak

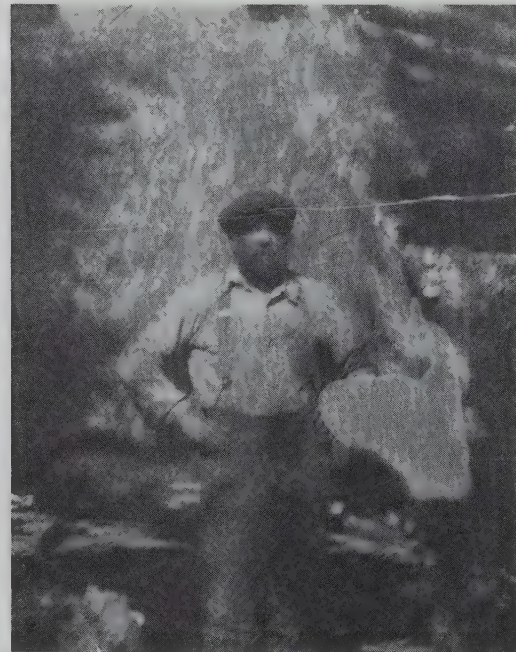
Nels Lee was born in Hendrum, Minnesota, one of fourteen children. In 1911 he came to Canada with his brothers, Martin and Bill, to homestead in Sexsmith - where he was also a carpenter, trapper and farmer.

Eva Lee came from Skegness, Lincolnshire County, England, as a mail-order bride. After some correspondence with Nels Lee, a forty-year-old bachelor, they were married in Sexsmith with his brothers in attendance. Nels bought a 1928 Chevrolet and they settled on a homestead in West Vale.

Soon the family came along: Dorothy was born in the Grande Prairie Hospital in 1930; Annie was born at home in 1931, with the help of a mid-wife, Mrs. Parlee; Stella was born at home in 1932, with the help of the district nurse, because the labor was hard and the hospital too far away; and Harry came into the world in 1934, with the help of mid-wife, Mrs. Annie Dopher, a neighbor.

CHILDREN'S PASTIMES

The Lee children played in the pasture by the creek as they grew older. We had cats, dogs and sheep to play with, and once we got chased by the bull. Sometimes we would go to Uncle Bill's for the treats Aunty made. Or we would go to Dophers to play with Wesley or listen to Alex



Nels Lee as a
trapper.

play his mandolin or guitar. I sometimes went with Dad and Oscar Berkland in a boat, on the creek that ran through the pasture. Once Harry almost drowned in the dugout by the house. And I had a close call too. We kids were throwing old boots, rocks and stones in the creek

and I almost threw myself in. I was saved when my dress caught on some barbed wire in the trees close by.

The land produced a vegetable garden, as well as wheat and oats that had to be threshed each year. In the fall a big threshing crew came to harvest the crop. Since horses had to be used to haul the bundles, the crew slept at the Lee place. Mrs. Lee had a girl to help with the cooking, as four kids and a threshing crew was a lot to cook for.

Besides farming, Nels cleared land, hunted moose and deer for extra food, and trapped in the winter. He also walked to Wanham for groceries that were needed from time to time. (no luxuries)

SAILING THE SUN BONNETS

There was a sportsground in West Vale and once a year we would go to the Sportsday. We children really enjoyed the ice cream cones and candy. One year Mom bought us some sun bonnets, real cute. But did we girls like them? No! We wouldn't even put them on. We sailed them down the creek instead, much to Mom's dismay and anger. I guess we were tomboys, preferring to play with homemade toys, sticks and animals instead of dolls and girlish things.

It was soon time for me to go to school and Nels didn't want me to go to the school in West Vale, so he decided to move to Wanham. He and Mom went to the Land Titles Office and filed on 160 acres of bushland, unbroken and wild. Mom had to file because Dad had had enough homesteads already. The land was bought for ten dollars in Mom's name.

Before we could move, Nels had to build a cabin and out-house (outside toilet). He built a log cabin all by hand, moved the furniture and got a temporary barn and pasture for the animals. I guess neighbors helped him move the machinery, furniture and animals to our new homestead in Wanham.

The Parlees bought the West Vale homestead. Later, part of it was used for a cemetery and the house became a church in the town of Wanham.

There was lots of work to do on our new homestead: land to be cleared for a barn, chicken house, garage, gardens and pasture; a bigger house to be built to have more room for the family. We lived in the cabin for quite a long time. It was warm and cozy, all made of logs.

THE NEW HOUSE

The new house was finished before we kids started school. It had an upstairs, a cellar for vegetables, a veranda, a bay window, a big kitchen with table and benches for us kids, and a living room with a gramophone for music and a battery radio for the news.

Oscar Berkland stayed with the kids whenever Mom and Dad had to go to town. I remember hearing owls walking on the roof at night. It was quite scary.

Dad also built a garage for the 1928 Chevrolet, and a big barn with a hayloft for hay and oat bundles and for us kids to play in. The cabin was made into a workshop where Nels kept his carpenter tools, trapping supplies and things needed to run the farm. He was a good carpenter and made furniture for the house and other people in the district, as well as school desks.



Nels' house on the homestead in the Birch Hills with Stella and her mother, Eva.

NELS LEE A BUSY MAN

Nels Lee hunted and trapped in the winter. Moose and deer were needed for meat. Bears were killed because they raided beehives and chicken houses. The bear fat was used to make lye soap.

Every winter Nels got traps out, baited them, marked out a trapline and set the traps. He trapped coyotes, rabbits, squirrels, weasels and muskrats. After skinning them, the hides were put inside-out on a board to dry. Then they were taken off, put in sacks, tagged, and sent to Edmonton to the Fur Company.

Over the years Nels did carpenter work in Wanham to make money. He worked on houses, was foreman for the building of South Slope School and helped finish the high school. He had a shingle-maker and a rope-maker.

Having no electricity, everything was done by lamplight. In winter chores were done by lantern. Nels used to grind wheat by hand to be cooked for morning cereal. He also repaired shoes as there was no shoemaker's shop nearby.

The days started early for Nels Lee. In summer he got up at 4 a.m., did the chores, and went to town to work. In winter he got up at 5 a.m., but he worked late into the night.

One year, during the war years when there was a camp at Dawson Creek, Nels took a job there for a few months. Mrs. Lee and the children did the chores and looked after the farm. Nels Lee was also a vet when the animals got sick and often helped neighbors when they had problems. Yes, Nels Lee was a very busy man.

FOREST FIRES

There were many forest fires in those days. When they got bad, the buildings had to be hosed down with water using a hand pump, with we children helping along. Sometimes the fires came so close everyone had to pitch in and help, by making back-fires and using wet sacks to put the fire out. Once, on the way home from school, the fire was on both sides of the road. Nels rushed through to get home, with timber that was on fire falling all around him. Another time we were at Jakubowski's slough when a fire got out of control. Nels took us kids and ran ahead of the fire. It was a close call as the fire reached the fence just as Nels and the kids did.

I was afraid to walk to school alone and was afraid of the older children who walked on the same road. One day, after a forest fire had gone through the area, the smoke was so dense I could see nothing but my feet. I decided to keep close to the older kids but one of the boys started to throw little rocks at me and told me not to walk too close.

It was nice when Stella started to school because we had company. We walked to school all year round, three miles each way. In summer we were sometimes caught in thunderstorms, duststorms or heat waves. But we liked to pick wild flowers and berries on the way home. And soon we were walking with the neighbor's kids; Moultons, Kandts and Bozarth's.

Spring, there was water on the road and mud so thick we had to wear gum-boots. Sometimes the water was too deep to walk through, so we crossed on the barbed wire fence or walked 'way around on the ground that wasn't so water-logged.

In the fall, the weather was dryer and cooler but winter was a different thing with snow-clogged roads, drifts and icy winds. On warmer days we made angels in the snow or built snow igloos. On cold days the lunches were always frozen when we got to school. All of the kids in school heated up their cocoa on the school heater every day.

We had a lot of fun in school though. In winter we would have snowball fights. In summer we would play games like softball, red light, ring-around-the-rosy, tag, blindman's bluff, Aunty-I-Over, Farmer in the Dell and London Bridge. And we also practiced for sportsday events.

Every year there was a sportsday in Wanham where they had lots of refreshments - pop, ice cream and candy floss. There were sports events and gambling games. We kids always enjoyed it so much.

One year Stella and I wanted to go so bad that we scrubbed and cleaned a bunk house that belonged to a road crew, across the road from our farm. We used the money we got paid for sportsday.

George, the cook at the road camp, let us help him and always gave us a piece of pie if there was any left. Ernie, the boss, used to give us rides to school in his truck.

People were always stopping by the Lee farm for milk, eggs, butter, vegetables and water. Some of them stayed over night, some were just passing by. One year some

people from Winnipeg camped on our land and another time, a Missionary Van. Salesman for Rawleigh and Watkins were regular overnight stoppers.

Christmas time at school meant practicing for concerts and carol singing. The Lee kids always took part in the concerts. One year I was a bell and Stella was a wreath. Other times I was in Hansel and Gretel and in a Flag Drill. Of course, we always looked forward to Santa Claus at the end of the concert with his candy, oranges and apples. The tree was trimmed and people came from miles around, dressed in their best. Most people came in sleighs. The Lees came in a sleigh, the whole family wrapped up against the cold and freezing winds.

Our Christmas dinner wasn't the traditional turkey, roast beef or ham. Being of Norwegian descent, Nels Lee wanted Lute Fisk, and Lefsa, a pancake cooked on top of the stove.

It was not all play on the homestead for the Lee children. They helped clear the land, piling the brush in piles to be burned. There were rocks and stumps to pick. Then Nels would walk with the horse and plow, breaking up the land. The children helped plant and harvest the garden. There was milking to do morning and night. Horses and a herd of twenty goats to be fed and watered, wood to saw and split, water to carry from the well to the house. In summer water was hauled to the garden in a barrel on a stoneboat. The weeding had to be done, and wild berries were picked for jams and canning. Many berries grew wild around the farm: raspberries, strawberries, currants, blueberries, gooseberries, dew berries and high bush cranberries.

The hay had to be cut, dried and hauled home in a hay rack, to be stored in the hayloft of the barn. We grew many different vegetables in the garden: tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, beans, peas, corn, cucumbers, onions, turnips, parsnips, pumpkin and sugar beets.

In winter there was snow to carry for the reservoir on the stove and for drinking water, wood to carry for the stove and heater, honey had to be taken from the beehives, and wool from the West Vale farm to be carded by hand, spun into yarn on the spinning wheel, dyed and knitted into socks, mittens and scarves.

In winter we listened to stories on the radio; Red Ryder, The Lone Ranger. Lux Theatre, Inner Sanctum, The Shadow, plus the local talk show from Grande Prairie. The wind-up gramophone was another highlight, with all the old records to be played. Reading was also a good pastime.

RELATIVES VISIT FROM ENGLAND

Just before the war, Mrs. Lee's father, Mr. Daniel, and her sister, Eddy (Edith), came from England for a visit. Grandfather walked to Wanham and met the town people and relatives. Aunt Eddy used to walk the three miles to school with me. They enjoyed the stay on the farm but had to get back before the war came. They made it back just in time before the Germans started torpedoing ships.

After that Stella would take the dog and walk with me as far as the bushline (the Hauser Place) in the morning and meet me at night. It was scary for two little girls.



Children with pet goats.

Going to school was an ordeal for the Lee children, especially the first year I had to go alone. I was shy and afraid of people and older children; even the teacher, Miss Prevost, who was so nice. I sat with Eleanor Thorin the first year, and did we get into some scraps at times.!



Nels - an apple picker - he picked over 3000 boxes of apples.

THE LEES LEAVE WANHAM

In 1946, Nels got all the household goods, machinery and animals together for an auction sale. Just before the sale a forest fire came close to wiping the Lees out, but the wind changed at the last minute. It was a big day. People came from all over the Peace River area. The Lees left Wanham in the 1928 Chevrolet pulling a trailer loaded with their goods. They stopped at many places, eventually settling in Rutland, B.C. Here Nels bought 4 acres of land and grew pole beans and tomatoes for the canneries in Kelowna. He also worked as a carpenter around Okanagan Valley until he died in November, 1948.

Mrs. Lee sold the land in Rutland and, now a pensioner, is settled in Vancouver. Dorothy lived in the Red Deer Institution for the mentally retarded until her death in May, 1975. I, Annie was married in Kelowna where I lived until 1966. I now live in New Westminister, B.C. Stella married in New Westminister and eventually settled in Vernon. She has two children. Harry lives in Calgary with his wife and two children.

LEE, SAMUEL PORTER

submitted by Edith Hislop

In 1925, Grandpa, John Noren came to Heart Valley and bought a half-section of land from Mr. F. Smith, a returned service man. The first winter he lived in Spirit River rather than on his newly acquired land NW and SE 12-76-3-6. After looking over the land in Heart Valley, Grandpa let my Uncles, Aunt and Uncle, and my parents know how fertile the land was. As a result, all the Noren family came to Heart Valley homesteads.

In the spring of 1927, my father, Samuel P. Lee, and

my Uncle, Rowland Butterwick, came by train from Pincher Creek to Wanham. They both got a job on the section while waiting to file on land. My Dad and Uncle used to travel by speeder through the bush to Prestville.

Wanham was already a good town in 1927 when they arrived. There was Peter Tansem's Store and Post Office, Ralph Pickard's Blacksmith Shop, Baker's Restaurant, Livery Barn and another building in the town proper and of course the railroad station some distance away. Daddy and Uncle Rowland returned to Pincher Creek to ship their household furnishings, machinery and animals. It took one boxcar for both families' worldly possessions.

FAITH AND TRUST

On May 3, 1928 Mamma took the train from Pincher Creek to Wanham. She stopped in Edmonton to order day-old chicks from an advertisement she had seen in the paper. The advertisement required a reference and money, but a policeman on the corner of Jasper Avenue and 101 Street advised Mamma not to send money but rather, to order C.O.D. Then the policeman wrote his name and address for a reference even though my Mother had never seen him before in her life - such trust - such trust that policeman had in his fellowman in those days.

The scariest part of that trip for my Mother, was crossing the Battle River on the high Grand Trunk wooden trestle bridge at Duhamel. It was very windy and the train barely crawled as it was swaying so badly. Mamma recalls that the telegraph poles below looked like toothpicks and a hayrack drawn by a team looked like a toy. The conductor came through to assure the passengers there was a double rail just in case the train was derailed. Believe me, that statement didn't give the passengers any confidence. However, my Mother really doesn't remember hearing about a train being derailed on that bridge, but then that was before radio and we were too poor to even subscribe to the *Free Press* at a dollar a year. We did however, have the *Farm and Ranch Review*, as a subscription for it was 5 years for 75¢.



Mr. and Mrs. Sam Lee on their wedding day.

Since Daddy and Grandpa had come to Wanham to meet the train so often for my uncles, Mamma decided that she'd come on Mail Day and not have them coming all those extra miles over bad roads. Mr. Pete Tansem met all the trains at the Wanham Station with his pick-up truck - the first and only motor vehicle in Wanham, as Mamma recalls. Being a lady, Mamma was invited to ride downtown in the cab of Mr. Tansem's vehicle - a real luxury in those pioneer days. She went to Tansem's Store and bought garden seeds for the garden plot that Grandpa and Daddy had plowed with a walking plow on the homestead. After that, my Mother went to Baker's Restaurant where the 12-14 men crew who were digging the basement for the first Wanham Hotel ate. Mamma helped Mrs. Baker wait tables and wash dishes. What a surprise Uncle Walfred had when he saw the new waitress! He was among the hotel construction crew. The world is very small for I learned 40 years later that my principal, Mr. Ralph Pritchard also was on the construction crew of the Wanham Hotel. He often spoke of the friendly people of the district and I'm sure his banjo strumming endeared him to the people of Wanham Community.

Finally Jack MacLean, the Heart Valley Mailman, arrived at the Wanham Post Office and he said that he'd give Mamma a ride to Heart Valley. Jack put Mamma's suitcases into the wagon box and she got up on the spring seat beside him for the ride to Heart Valley. It was a very rough ride going over the stumps and then down into the potholes. The road was corduroyed in places through the Green Timber of the Birch Hills. For the other part each teamster had to pick and choose the passable route. At best, it was a treacherous venture. In many places the water was so deep that it went over the backs of the team of horses. The suitcases were naturally dripping wet. The mail was in waterproof canvas bags but Mamma remembers Jack MacLean holding the registered mail bag or first class mail bag on a rope over his shoulder.

When they arrived at Heart Valley, my Mother stayed with Marie MacLean. Mamma recalls Olive, about 4 years old, and Eileen - about 2, playing with Paddy

Meadus, about 5 or 6 years old. Paddy was making doll clothes with the MacLean girls.

When Uncle Rowland came on horseback for the mail, Jack MacLean told him that Mamma had come out from Wanham with him. Uncle Rowland went home from the post office (that was at Bill MacLean's) and told Grandpa. They hitched up Uncle Rowland's team to the top buggy and came for Mamma. Mamma was amazed to find dry roads. The roads usually followed the best buffalo trail, for her top buggy ride in Heart Valley. Obviously Heart Valley was Paradise!

On July 29, 1928 Mamma and Daddy went picking raspberries on our homestead S.E. 1-76-3-6. They came home with a 5 gallon can and two water pails of raspberries, and Mamma canned them before going to bed. The canned raspberries stood in the pantry for many days, for early in the morning of July 30, Daddy went for Mrs. Pearson. Uncle Rowland went for Mrs. MacDonald, and Uncle Jalmar went for Dr. E. Mary Johnstone. I was born at 10:00 a.m. on July 30. My Mother, too, owes her life to Dr. Johnstone, for she sat up night after night reminding my Mother not to move on account of phlebitis. I was Dr. Johnston's first baby girl in Canada. She and I visited regularly every Tuesday while she lived at St. Joseph's Hospital in her last years.

GOWN FOR A QUEEN

Among my most prized possessions is a gray silk brocade evening bag that Dr. Johnstone gave me. It had quite a story, for it originally was her Mother's gown that she'd worn to be presented to Queen Victoria before she, her husband and children left for India.

Heart Valley was opened as a Soldier Settlement Community.

The Heart Valley neighbours at this time were Tina and Frank Mitchell, Mary and Fred Pearson, Madge and Howard Meadus, Jessie and Bill MacLean, Albert Cox, Pete MacNee, (William) Scotty McWhirter, Emmy and Harold Peebles, Margaret and Johnny Gulick, Marie and Jack MacLean, Mr. and Mrs. Noble Johnston and Art, Alex (Red) MacLean, Donald MacLean, Nellie and Angus MacLeod, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, Mr. and Mrs. McFadyen, Gertie and Norman MacDonald, Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Pete MacDonald, Mr. and Mrs. Fleming and John, Mrs. Munro, Jim and Ken, Harry Schooly, Hans Schmidt, Vera and Don Morrison and our family - Aunt Lillian and Uncle Jalmar, Uncle Art, Uncle Willie, Auntie Esther and Uncle Rowland, and Grandpa (John Noren).

The excessive water in swamps and sloughs provided excellent breeding grounds for mosquitoes. My parents remembered them being so thick that one had to cover one's mouth to keep them out while talking. Smudges were made in pails to help the animals. Horses all had shredded rags over their noses to help prevent runaways, as my parents weren't able to afford to buy the screened nose bags.

My parents started to build a 2 room house on the homestead S.E. 1-76-3-6 in June of 1928, and they had broken 19 acres, which was seeded to crop. Our one cow



Old Friends Meet Again. Mrs. Fred Wellman and Mrs. Sam Lee.

was tethered out on a rope with a loop on the end, so that the cow could have a new pasture each day. However, one day Mamma was leading it to water when the cow ran toward the field. My Mother tried to grab the rope but instead stepped into the loop, and she was dragged along over stumps and windfalls by her one leg. Mamma glimpsed the cow racing toward a 12" stump and she had visions of her leg being smashed. Suddenly the cow stopped, and my Mother jokingly tells that for once it paid to be chubby!

Life on our Heart Valley homestead was good and we were happy. Then on July 22, 1929 we were saddened when Grandpa, John Noren, passed away with a stroke. Mamma always said what a good present I'd given Grandpa, for I had spoken to Grandpa before he died.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

On November 11, 1930, Daddy and Mamma were invited to the Armistice Day Banquet and Dance in Wanham. I remember I could hardly wait to put on my pink dress and go to Wanham in Mr. Pete MacNee's car, that Uncle Art was driving. I stayed at Mr. and Mrs. Pete Tansem's. Wally (about 4) and LeRoy (about 6 years old) showed me how to put on their electric lights. It was the first time I'd seen a light come on by pulling a string! It left a real impression, for I remember it as clearly to-day as when it happened.

OH NO!

There was real excitement in the community over our radio. Daddy and Mamma were amazed at the clarity of distant programmes. However, often when neighbours came to hear those wonderful programmes, the reception was poor. I remember one such night when the Johnstons came. They stayed until past midnight but there were just a few crackles and nothing else so they decided to go home. They hitched up the team to the sleigh and had just gone out the gate when low and behold clear tones were heard. Immediately, Daddy ran out to the road to tell them to come back. This the Johnstons did, only to hear crackles once more!

100% BABY SISTER

At 5:00 a.m. on December 23, 1931, my only sister Joyce Constance was born. Auntie Esther was staying with us. Uncle Art went for Mrs. Norman (Gertie) MacDonald, and Mr. Pearson went to Wanham for Miss Smith, the District Nurse. I can remember sitting at the table eating porridge that Auntie had made, when Miss Smith came in carrying Joyce. Miss Smith showed me my new baby sister and asked if I liked her. I said, "100%". The next summer when Mamma, Joyce and I went with Daddy, on top of a load of grain to Wanham, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Harrington met us on the wooden sidewalk and asked "How's that 100% Baby?" I guess Miss Smith had told everyone in town about my 100% baby Sister.



The Sam Lee's 12th Anniversary. Left to Right: Sam, Edith, Joyce and Ellen.

BABY SISTER IN A DRAWER

When Daddy was away hauling grain, Mamma used to try to have the chores done. One day Mamma was out milking and left Joyce asleep in the crib and gave me my rag dolls and some paper and pencil. Mr. James (our neighbour) knocked at the door and asked, "Where's Mamma?" I said "She's out milking the cows, but do you want to see my Baby Sister?" When he said that he would, I ran and pulled out the dresser drawer and showed him Joyce, and then banged it shut again. About that time Mamma came in and saw the empty crib and all the clean clothes from the dresser drawers strewn all over the floor. To this day Mamma can't imagine how a 3 1/2 year old got a wee baby of three weeks out of the crib without harming her. My Mother remembers Mr. James giving her a real scolding, and she says it left a real imprint, for she never left me alone in the house again.

There was real excitement one spring day when I was 4 years old. A moose calf followed our cows home. Since Mr. Koeppen's mare had lost her colt, the moose calf nursed on the mare. To prevent anyone harming the moose, Daddy hung a cowbell around its neck. The moose got so proficient at running through the bush and keeping the bell completely silent, that it was shot. Everyone in the whole community was sad when we lost our pet moose.

One day Joyce and I were playing in the snow with our sleigh and some pails. Suddenly a colt we'd pail fed with milk galloped over to get some milk. When he found the pails empty, he wheeled and kicked up his heels, barely missing Joyce. When Joyce told Mamma, Daddy, and Uncle Walfred at supper she said, "It wouldn't have mattered if the colt's heels had hit me because I'm all freckles anyway." On another occasion Auntie Esther gave Joyce a nickel and she bought a lemon for "those awful freckles"! (It must have done the trick as Joyce has no freckles to-day.)

HAIR CUT, ANYONE!

Of all the grown-ups in Heart Valley, the one Joyce and I thought was super was Noe Mongeon. Often relatives and neighbours came to have their hair cut by

Daddy or Mamma, but Noe came to have his hair cut by Joyce and me. I remember well the day, and no doubt Noe does too! Joyce started with the clippers on one side and I was on the other with the scissors. No wonder Noe hibernated as much as he could that winter, or if he just had to go out any place, he kept his hat on!

In August of 1935, I went with Aunt Sylvia for my first day at Heart Valley School. Miss Elaine Seller met us at the school door with a big brass bell that she was ringing. I can remember Miss Seller giving me a picture of a girl to colour, and I made her dress, face, arms and legs purple with green polka dots. Miss Seller asked me why I'd coloured it like that. I had remembered Mamma had always tried to have things match when she sewed. I guess I'd carried that matching a bit too far!

I'll never know how Miss Seller and Mr. Nowlin, our next teacher, could teach so well with so few books and materials. I'll never forget Mr. Nowlin's stories of Canada and Canadian Place Names. Even to-day his former students are interested in history. It sure helped with our studies, that Mrs. T.P. Geggie of Toronto sent Mamma magazines. This was arranged by Miss Grigor, our deaconess. Not only did we read the magazines, but everyone else in the community did too. Then the magazines were taken to school.

Mr. Nowlin had the impossible task of double-entry Grade 1, students plus teaching all the other grades to Grade 10. Joyce happened to be the one student who began Grade 1, January 1938. I remember Ivy Murray asking Mr. Nowlin, on Joyce's first day, how to spell *awkward*. That happened to be one of the words that Art Austin had taught Joyce, so she whispered it to Ivy, but Ivy asked Mr. Nowlin again. Mr. Nowlin said that Ivy should listen to Joyce, and he complimented Joyce for knowing such a hard word. That night Joyce came home and said to Mamma, "Ivy is my friend now, but I don't think she'll want to be my friend when I pass her and go into Grade 10!" Needless to say, Ivy remained her friend, as Joyce didn't pass from Grade 1 to Grade 10 that second day of school!

The activities of the community revolved around the Church. Miss Grigor made trips to Heart Valley by team and sleigh in the winter, and horse and buggy in the summer. We all loved Miss Grigor. No wonder I wanted to be a preacher just like her, when I got big. Few people had musical instruments, so the portable organ really added so much to the Church services. I'll always remember the big Bible Story Pictures on the wall of our little log Church and the pretty miniatures we received for learning Bible Verses and the Catechism. They were treasured then as much as the worn ones in my Bible to-day.

The most exciting holiday for Mamma, Joyce and me, was driving with Auntie Esther and Uncle Rowland to Brownfield. I remember them saying as we approached Athabasca, "Look for the ferry!" The holiday ended badly, because I had appendicitis and peritonitis and had to go into the Coronation Hospital.



C.O.D.

For my eighth birthday Uncle Willie gave me a dollar. Joyce and I studied the Eaton's catalogue for days deciding how we would spend all that money. Finally I decided we'd get a lunch cloth and 4 serviettes for Mamma, a shaving mirror for Daddy, 2 yards of blue flowered print cloth for a dress that Mamma would sew for me, 1 yard of printed voile for Joyce to make doll clothes with and I'd have a 1/2 yard of broadcloth to make doll clothes with. (The money ran out so I couldn't get a yard, at 4 cents). In order to save my dollar as long as possible, I sent the order c.o.d. What a dreadful disappointment, and maybe a worse one for Mamma and Daddy, to find I had to pay an additional charge when the parcel arrived at the post office.

About this time Daddy shipped a prize steer. Instead of getting a cheque, he received a bill for thirty-nine cents for freight and feed for that steer!

When Mr. Nowlan left Heart Valley School, Mr. Broadbent came. He had retired but answered the call for teachers during the war. He was very musical and imparted his love of music to all his students. In Edmonton, T.W.O. Broadbent is remembered as the first person to play the bells.

I remember Daddy loading about 35 bushels of wheat into the wagon box and then Mamma, Joyce and me going with him to Sexsmith via Webster, to have it ground into flour (whole wheat and white), porridge, and bran at Warren's Flour Mill. After the wheat was unloaded, Daddy took the horses to the livery barn and we got on the train for our very first train ride from Sexsmith to Grande Prairie - a whole 14 miles. It seemed longer because of the stop in Clairmont and also children can hardly wait! Auntie Esther had given Joyce and me each twenty-five cents. What wonderful things we bought! We got 2 pencils, 2 erasers, 1 box of wooden crayons, 1 box wax crayons, 2 little note books and two coloring books. There was no place like the five and ten cents store owned by Newton and Smart.

Mr. Prokop Florian was our next teacher. He really stressed penmanship and practiced what he told us to do.

Miss Golden came as our next teacher. Joyce got into a big problem with Miss Golden, for when she needed a scribbler, she wrote her middle name instead of Joyce. What an angry teacher! What an uncomfortable little girl! Later we found out why the writing of "Connie" on a scribbler had caused such dismay. Conrad was Miss Golden's financee and she thought Joyce was making fun of her boyfriend or teasing her!

Miss Head was my last teacher at Heart Valley School. She brought her own set of encyclopedias, which she shared with her students. During her years as teacher, we also got a new shipment of books. Believe me, those treasured books were handled with care!

The next year it was almost impossible to hire anyone to help with the farm work, so Daddy prepared the fields for sowing, driving twenty head of horses, and Mamma used a twelve-foot drill pulled by four horses to seed the 533 acres. Except for 14 hours, no hired help was available to stook that crop. Mamma cut the grain with an eight-foot horse-drawn binder. Mamma and Daddy

caught up to the binder each morning by getting up at four a.m. and stooking until eight a.m. Then they would come home, have breakfast and get ready to go back to the field. Mamma would cut, and Joyce and I would help Daddy stook. Daddy would put up the first two bundles and we were supposed to finish the stook, but more often than not we would build a huge stook, then take a rest! No wonder Mamma and Daddy had to work so hard!

After the harvesting was completed, Heart Valley School opened with Mrs. Wellman as teacher. I went to St. Joseph's Academy for grade nine. Mrs. Wellman tells the story about Joyce and Margaret Noren, our cousins, going to the store one noon hour, and during the course of the afternoon asking permission to leave the room (to have a snack from the groceries). It came as quite a shock to Margaret and Joyce when Mrs. Wellman asked them if they'd need to go back for more groceries before going home that night.

It really helped that Jean Edey was also at the Academy the year I took grade nine, for I was very lonesome that first year away from home. The Sisters were very kind and understanding. I still correspond with them.

Joyce remained at Heart Valley for another year. This year she had two teachers, Mr. Sidney Macklin and Miss Nina Sands - both Normalites. Both endeared themselves to their students.

I attended South Slope High School in Wanham for grades ten and eleven, where Miss Settle was our teacher. There were fourteen students in grades nine, ten and eleven in 1942-43. What a time for Miss Settle to juggle all those subjects into our time tables. I stayed at Prevost's and boarded at Chilton's, until Mrs. Chilton became ill, then I ate at the Harrington's.

For grade eight, Joyce went to West Vale where Mrs. Ed Tracy was her teacher. Joyce says that 45 to 48 students in grades one to eight, sticks in her mind. There was a very active Young People's group lead by Mr. Hancock, the Presbyterian minister. The Heart Valley students came by caboose in winter and covered truck in the summer. Mr. Tracy was the van driver and during the winter he stayed at our home. Joyce says, "We left at six

a.m. and arrived home at six p.m. Pal, my little dog, was always at the gate on the road allowance to meet me."

For grade twelve, I returned to St. Joseph's Academy and Joyce joined me for her grade nine. Mamma and Daddy paid for our board mostly by bringing beef, pork and chickens. Only one round on our oat field yielded 120 bushels to the acre. Imagine the heartbreak when the rest snowed under!

NEIGHBORS

During this year, two acts of neighborliness comes to mind. Mamma had been really ill with the flu for a very long time, when we came home for the week-end. Mrs. Mitchell came to ask how Mamma was, and when we told her not very well, she came over carrying a flour sack filled with freshly baked bread. This caring really helped Mamma. On another occasion in the spring, Mrs. Gulick had been to visit Mamma and learned that she was very concerned that Joyce and I would have no money. Everyone was fighting fires. The fire ranger came to Gulicks and was riding horseback through to Webster, and Mrs. Gulick sent her cream cheque to us at St. Joseph's Academy. There were only eight students in my graduating class at St. Joseph's Academy.

In 1946-47, I stayed home and supervised my home school of Heart Valley. I had decided that I wanted to be a teacher, but even Daddy wondered if I had enough patience. The students at Heart Valley were Christine and Eva Mitchell, Rosemarie, Katie and Fritz Scriba, Johnny and Marcelle Noren, Joyce and Douglas Edey, Mary Ann (Mrs. Beaune's granddaughter), Doreen, Jeannette and Robert McCarthy, Sonny (Clarence), Dorothy and Lyle Trapp. On Arbor Day we planted two trees. The pine tree still stands as a monument to that class. We also raised money to buy a piano for the school. One of the money making projects was a dance. Leroy Tansem, C.F.G.P. announcer said, "Come one, come all - the best music in the west. That's true. I know. I've been." No one deserved such a compliment more than Gerald Mitchell, who supplied the music.

For grades ten and eleven, Joyce stayed at Mr. and Mrs. Harry Cameron's and attended South Slope High School - the ultra modern new school in Wanham. Mr. Ben Russell was Joyce' teacher, as well as principal. The most exciting extra-curricular activity for the Wanham girls that year, was the establishment of the Girl Guide Company, under the leadership of Ozan Prevost and Maggie Ungstad. The second year they even ventured into the entertainment field, by putting on a Minstrel show that drew people from as far away as Prestville, Heart Valley and Belloy. After three encores, the Guides thought they'd hit the big time in show biz!

In September of 1947, I enrolled in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. Upon completion of grades eleven and twelve at University High School, Joyce did also. Her first school was Heart Valley, and she stayed with Aunt Lily and Uncle Walfred. My first teaching position was also in the Peace River Country at Elmworth, where I was teacher and principal. I walked to school, but a grade eleven student drove his car!



Family Gathering. Back Row, Left to Right: Willie Noren, unknown, Edith Lee, Ellen Lee, Laura Noren, Mrs. Richards (Aunt Laura's mother), Esther Butterwick. Front Row: Joyce Lee, Johnny Noren, Marcelle Noren, Jessie Bryce.

Joyce and I have always been fortunate in having interested students, co-operative parents and helpful staff members. I always thought I'd be happy if I could be half as good a teacher as my own teachers.

Although Mamma and Daddy had a sale in November of 1947, they continued to farm at Heart Valley, going out each spring and fall from our home in Edmonton, to sow and harvest the crop.

On June 17, 1959 we were saddened to lose Daddy with a coronary thrombosis. A few years later Mamma sold the farm to Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Dick and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Huether.

Mamma continues to live in her own home, where her yard looks like a little park.

Joyce and Boris celebrated their Silver Anniversary on April 6, 1978, at the home of their daughter Noreen and son-in-law Don Cucheran. Boris is Sales Manager of C.P.Air. Joyce and Boris have two daughters and one son. Noreen is a teacher, Lee a social worker and Tony, nine, is in grade four.

George and I have one daughter - Jessie-Eloise, who has just completed her third year in Honours History at the University of Alberta. George is a high school librarian, and I am teaching Grade one.

We all have pleasant memories of our life on the farm, and Heart Valley will always be *home*, despite its disappearance from the maps of Alberta!



Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lee.

LEE, BILL (INGRAL)

submitted by Mrs. Lee

Bill Lee came from Minnesota over the Edson Trail, in 1913, and filed on some land in Sexsmith. He went to war for three years during World War I. (1915-1918) In October of 1928, he filed on land in West Vale. (N.E. 36-76-4-6) His wife, Aliette, came in the spring of 1935. In 1949 she filed on a quarter of land.

The Lees had five children - Olga, Chester, Rose, Irene and Billy.

Later they traded their land in West Vale to Ole Lindjord for property he owned at Aldergrove, B.C., and moved there in 1951.

At the time of this writing (January, 1979) the whole family lives in British Columbia. Bill is nearly eighty-four years of age.



The Bill Lee Children. Back Row, Left to Right: Olga and Chester. Front Row: Rose, Billy and Irene.

THE BILL AND GEORGE LE MARQUAND STORY

As told to Lily G. Sather

"Actually I had no right to be on the project," said Bill Le Marquand. "I wasn't even a soldier. I went there in the first place to help my brother, George, get established on his land. At that time he didn't even drive a tractor!"

The two bachelor brothers had owned land at Thorhild, Alberta, where they had been farming for twenty-two years. But then the Lassiter project opened up for soldiers, George sold his land in Thorhild and obtained some on the project.

"I knew George was no farmer," Bill continued, "and I also knew that though the land was broken and had been floated, there would be an awful lot of roots to contend with, so I decided the best thing I could do was to go to the Peace River country for a year and help him to get started.

We arrived in Wanham in March, 1948, just as the snow was beginning to go. Our two horses and a full line of machinery came by rail. I was thrilled with George's land on the project, but George wasn't. He thought it was just too hilly! I don't remember the legal land description, but the farm was situated just two miles north of Lassiter School. There was no house there of course, so I began to build one. I had been brought up in a carpentry shop, so that didn't pose a problem. I built it 14' x 18'. It was made of lumber and was a story and a half building. George helped me when he could.

There were a lot of folks living on the project in those days, and most of them were very good neighbors. Some of those coming to mind are: Wilf Martin, Mr. Jennings and his sons, Art and Floyd, Connells, Mills, Johnsons, Crockers, MacNamees, Kroll, Gordon Crossford, Danny Palmer, Mr. Weiger, Hank Reiger, Arne Hill, Bill Curtis, Mr. Mayne and Mr. Deheny.

We soon discovered we couldn't get George established in one year, so I just stayed on.

Most of the farmers seeded their full acreage that first year and laughed at George and me, because we had only eighty acres ready to seed. The crops were wonderful that year and those who had seeded all their land to grain had to give the government a large payment that time.

The following year was a different story because George and I had a whole lot of summer fallow ready to seed. We had bumper crops on it, while our neighbors who had seeded all their land the first year, and had disced down their beautiful stubble with too-small equipment, got nothing, and they kept getting nothing. We felt we had good land, and by using good farming methods, George and I made out well.

As to livestock, we only had a couple of cows for a little while, but we gave them up because we felt we had to concentrate on one thing at a time and we had all the roots and hills to contend with."

LUCK OF THE DRAW

Bill doesn't remember who had the land he eventually procured before he did, but whoever it was had gone deeply into cattle and, as a consequence, had gone broke and had to give up his land because he had no feed for his stock. The government decided to make it available to the public, so since Bill was, as he put it, 'Johnny on the spot,' he decided to apply. Floyd Jennings was also interested, and the two went to Grande Prairie to make a draw. Their names were both put in a hat. Floyd had the first choice, and picked up the right ticket but ironically enough, without looking, put it back in the hat and drew out the other. "And he lost it, just on account of that," Bill said. "It was unbelievable that it could happen, but it did, and I got the land!"

"My land was two miles west of the school and thus four miles closer to town. I offered to trade George for his land, since he was always complaining about the hills, but he never would do it. I always drove George to town and had to go four miles to pick him up, and then go past my place four miles at night to take him home again. I thought in this way it would make it easier, but despite his complaints, George didn't bite.

Our town, was usually Rycroft. We didn't want to go to Wanham because of the great big hill. If you could avoid it, why not?"

SOLD OUT

"I made good on my land. The only trouble with it was that it was rounded, just like a ball, but that didn't bother me at all. I kept it for ten years, then sold it to Roy Kroll."

BACK AGAIN

"I didn't have my machinery sold yet when Mr. Jennings hit me up, 'You've sold your land, why don't you buy mine?'"

"I've just sold," I answered, "I'm just not going to go



*George
LeMarquand,
1966.*

and buy some more!"

"I'll give it to you cheap, - \$2500.00," he said. He owed \$1500.00 on it. He would get \$1000.00.

So I went and looked at his place and found it more beautiful than mine - more level, you know. It was a half section located just west of where they have the corrals now. It had gone back a little, but what's the difference? So again I started farming when I thought I had quit. I farmed there for four years."

"During that time there was an elderly man still on the project (I can't remember his name, but he was the last one to sell out.) Anyway, he was too sick to farm his land and he asked me to put it in for him. It was all fertilized and had been summer-fallowed for two years. He offered me two-thirds of the crop. So again I said, "Why not?"

I seeded flax and got a wonderful crop. It graded no. 1, and sold for three dollars a bushel.

At the end of four years on the Jennings farm, Tom Harbrook offered me \$9,000.00 for it. I hadn't been feeling too good at the time, so I said, "O.K." and I sold.

When George heard I was leaving, he sold his land also. The funny thing was, I got just as much out of my second farm as he did for his homestead, and he had stayed on it for fifteen years, while I had mine for only four!

I felt poor farming methods were the reason why so many of the boys, on the project went 'belly up'. The land was not to blame. They wanted to farm just too much land for the size of machinery they had.

I was told one day that the land was absolutely no good - but I haven't seen more beautiful land - not a rock on it! The land is still there. A person can't lie about land - you can go and look at it yourself. I was accused of working against the project, but that just made me laugh. I was one of those who loved it best - I think I loved it better than the soldiers did themselves!

My brother George was always involved in community affairs, and he was always after the government to get a better deal for the people on the project. He succeeded,

too, by getting them to lower the yearly share owed to the government, from one-third to one-quarter."

HINDSIGHT

"Personally, I think it would have been better if the government had given the soldiers one quarter of broken land, and left the other raw. Then I think they would have all made out, even with the small machinery they had. As it was, when the government sold them registered seed oats for \$2.50 a bushel, and it rotted on the ground, it was 'the straw that broke the camel's back,' in many instances, and they had to go further into debt for more seed."

"The only church services I knew of on the project were those held by the Anglicans who came to the school from Spirit River."

"As to school activities, I knew very little, but I know that they had good dances in the school house."

"The only two teachers I can recall were Mrs. Jennings and young Schmyr. There were others, though."

"My brother, George was active in getting the Lassiter School going, as he had been earlier in Thorhild. Though a bachelor, he felt strongly that children needed a chance to get an education. He was on the Lassiter School Board, too."

"Neither George nor I were hunters, but I had the only team in the area, so when the others shot the game, I would haul it out, and thus I got my share, too."

MOON MAN

"The folks on the project called me 'the moon man' because I believe whatever weeds you have to kill, you have to work down after the moon is full, because they will die down then, but will grow back any other time. It works especially well in September and October because they don't have time to revive. I've used the method on toad flax, with excellent results, and I used it on second growth brush that was higher than my tractor, as well."

I had an old 15-30 tractor, with high compression pistons that gave it the power of a 22-36. I had steel wheels on it with extensions, which gave me an 18 inch wheel. I took the tractor and, without any machinery behind it, flattened all the second growth down. The following year the brush was dead and I could go ahead and burn it off. That's how I reclaimed the land and it cost me very little. Now every year I get moon books from the Dominion Seed House for my friends."

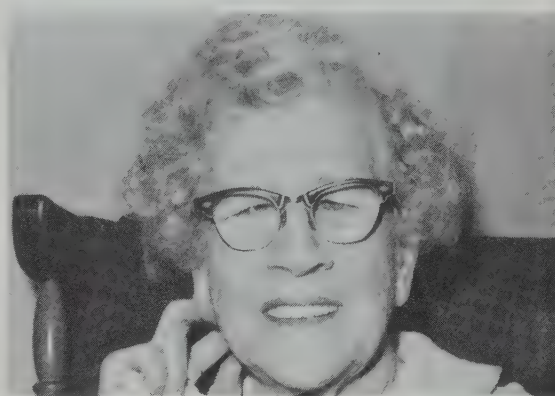
"George and I left Wanham in 1965 and went to live in Sexsmith. George put an ad in the paper: "Old bachelor needs a place to hang his hat! Anybody with a house for sale, please contact."

We bought one from Ray Peterson for \$2150.00 that included lot and garage.

Houses were being practically given away at that time, so I thought I might just as well take advantage of the opportunity. I bought an eight room house for \$1,000. A bit later two men with homes died, and I put in a bid for them - \$750.00 and \$850.00, and got them both. I fixed them up and rented them out.

George passed away on September 29th, 1972, and I lost interest in the houses so sold the big one for \$7,000.00, the \$750.00 one for \$5,000.00, and the \$850.00 one for \$5,000.00. Another one I had sold for \$9,000.00.

I retired in Grande Prairie and I am now living in Pioneer Lodge, and enjoying life very much in my senior years."



Mrs. Lucienne
Leriger.

THE LERIGER FAMILY

Lawrence Leriger was born at St. Henri, Montreal, Quebec on July 12, 1891. His parents, Leandre Leriger and Azelie (Cloutier) Leriger moved from Montreal to Williston, North Dakota, in 1898. The family made several moves in the next few years from North Dakota to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, thence to Athabasca, Grande Prairie, and in 1914, Leandre moved to Grizzly Bear Prairie (the area comprising present day Wanham and Belloy) where he worked on the Northern Alberta Railroad. He then decided to take a homestead with his son Lawrence and the fall of 1916 Laurent and his mother, Azelie, came to Grizzly Bear Prairie.

Lucienne Fortier was born in Ripon, Quebec, on May 11, 1895, to Narcisse Fortier and Victorine (Guenet) Fortier. The family moved to Morinville, Alberta, in 1907. Lucienne attended school there and later met a friend of the family from Ripon, Mrs. Edward Prevost, who had moved to Edmonton. Lucienne accompanied Mrs. Prevost, who had moved to Edmonton. Lucienne accompanied Mrs. Prevost to Estevan, Saskatchewan, and then Mr. Prevost moved to Grizzly Bear Prairie to farm with his father and brothers. Mrs. Prevost followed a short time later with her children accompanied by Miss Lucienne Fortier as a companion, who could speak French with her and her children. They travelled by train. It was at Grizzly Bear Prairie that Lucienne Fortier met Lawrence Leriger. They were married on April 17, 1917, in the Old Mission in Spirit River. They had the honor of being the first white couple to be married there. The newlyweds were destined to welcome many people to this new country: in fact, the day after their wedding, Lawrence met Mr. and Mrs. Murphy and 5 children at the train, and took them to Emil Melander's farm. In May 1917, Lucienne cooked breakfast for Mrs. Cameron when she arrived by train from Edmonton; In July 1917, the Tansem family arrived. During this time Lawrence

and Lucienne lived with Lawrence's parents, in the original log house at the site of the present village of Wanham.

This house became the birthplace of Albert on August 1, 1918, and later Jeannette September 29, 1919. The log house became the home for three generations of the family and as with all early families, it became the nucleus of parties, dances, joys and sorrows.



Mr. Leandre Leriger and Great-grandson, Albert. Precarious seat, eh Albert?

THE FLU

There were many hardships during these years. One of these was the flu epidemic of 1919. Like many others, Laurent became very ill and Lucienne cared for Laurent, his father and Mr. Munro. During this time she cared for the children, nursed the sick and milked six cows, while helping others as well.

In 1920, Laurent and his family moved to Spirit River, where Paul was born September 25, 1921; and then to Rolla, B.C., during which time Laurence (Lornie) was born in Pouce Coupe on February 25, 1925. Laurent was a man of many talents, which took him to varied places and subsequently to Nelson, B.C., in September 1926. It was not until Paul's 12th birthday, September 25, 1933, that the family returned to Grizzly Bear Prairie. They arrived in a McLaughlin Buick Sedan, pulling a trailer full of belongings and took over the Leriger family farm once again.

Less than two years after their arrival back, the baby of the family, Patricia, was born on April 5th, 1935, in Grande Prairie Hospital. At this time, Dr. Johnstone was taking her departure from Wanham and Miss Pickup, a nurse, had just arrived. The story is told that both of these pioneer nurses were responsible for saving the life of the tiny baby Patricia.

There were good times and bad during these next years; Leandre Leriger suffered a stroke, which was later the cause of his death. The second world war began in 1939 and many young people of the district went away to train



Lerigers: Left to Right: Albert holding Paul, Mr. Laurent Leriger, and Mrs. Azelie Leriger, Laurent's mother.



Leriger Family. Left to Right: Paul, Marion, Patsy and Ron Nease, Albert and Terry, Gemma and Lawrence. Seated: Lucille.

in Canada and to fight overseas. Among these were Albert, and Lornie who joined the R.C.A.F., and Paul who joined the army. All three served overseas. The parents and family left at home, while the sons were away during the war, found themselves busy with the extra workload on the farms. By 1945, the war ended and the three Leriger sons returned to Wanham. A new house had been built to replace the old log home (which was not demolished until recent years). Albert returned from England with a lovely bride, Terry, and a son, Paul Jr. Jeanette was working with the Canadian External Affairs Department and travelled around Europe. Lornie returned and soon married Jemma Gaboury of Codesa. They moved from Wanham, when his work took him elsewhere. Paul and Marion (a former district nurse at Wanham) were married and moved to Grande Prairie to live.

Life was more normal at the Leriger family farm and soon Laurent and Lucienne would be able to have a little time for themselves to travel. However, this was not to be, as Laurent died very suddenly in Edmonton in 1952, while taking medical treatment there. Pat left Wanham shortly after, to train as a nurse in Whitby, Ontario, and Lucienne decided to move from the farm to Edmonton to



Terry and Albert with son, Paul.

live with her sister. Jeannette, who had spent some time in the British Isles, met and married Peter Gleeson of Ireland. Pat soon completed her nurses training, returning to Spirit River to work with the Health Unit. Here she met Ron Nease, who was with the Royal Bank. They were married and later moved to Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge.

There was to be more sadness for the family with the death of grandmother Azelie Leriger, at the Youville Home in St. Albert in 1956, and by the sudden passing of Laurence (Lornie), a few years later.

Albert and Terry and their three sons continued to improve and enlarge the original family farm. Albert became Mayor of the Village of Wanham and has continued to work for the betterment of the community that Laurent, his father, had helped to build so many years before.

The family has grown in number over the years, with the blessings of grandchildren and great grandchildren for Lucienne. She presently makes her home at the Youville Nursing Home in St. Albert. She will be 85 years young on May 11, 1980. She still enjoys visitors, social functions, short excursions into Edmonton, visits with the family, and trips to Westlock where she plans to celebrate her 85th birthday on Mother's Day, May 11th.

The Lerigers - a proud pioneer family of the Grizzly Bear Prairie.

FRED LEWIS FAMILY

Colorful brochures, extolling the magnificence and bountiful life in the Peace River Country, reached Fred and Ethel Lewis in their home in Oregon. These promises, together with the pressures of a disastrous economic depression and a very strong pioneer spirit provided reason enough for them to take their three sons, (Bill, Mel, and Harvey), and move north in the spring of 1932.

During the winter of 1932, the family lived in Ponoka, where Fred attended all the auctions sales in the area, collecting livestock and equipment basic to commence farming in the new land.

Fred loaded all the family possessions into a box car in the spring of 1933. He travelled north with the freight train so he could tend the needs of the animals during the 2 to 3 days en route to Hines Creek. The rest of the family



Fred and Ethel Lewis with sons. Left to Right: Mel, Bill, Harvey and Harold.

had gone by passenger train to meet him.

One of the most prized possessions in the box car was a Star Touring Car. This was soon traded off for a cow and her calf, which at that time was considered more of a necessity to homestead living.

Hines Creek is remembered as a collection of sloughs and clouds of unbelievably hungry mosquitos. A move to Sexsmith soon followed, thereby becoming the base for trips in search of farmland. Ethel's sister and brother-in-law, Nellie and Harry Scott were already in Sexsmith and aided in the search for land. During the summer of 1933, Fred and Ethel homesteaded on the Fox Creek Trail, midway between Belloy and Rahab (now Codesa).

After wintering in an unused home on Fergies' property near Steele School, and after having built a one-room log cabin on their homestead, the move to their own land was made in 1934.

Land was cleared and sown in the ensuing years and a fourth son, Harold, was born. The productive acreage grew. More and better farming equipment was bought and a new home built. Life had become increasingly full and happy.

A forest fire in 1942 destroyed all their material possessions. By the grace of God no lives were lost. The Lewis family were overwhelmed by the generosity of all the wonderful people who came to their aid. Almost immediately building materials, farm animals, food, clothing and literally everything required to make a new start, was given by folks from near and far. Life was good again.



Lewis' Store at Belloy (formerly Scott's Store).

Ethel recalls her most nerve wracking experience on the homestead as 'the shooting of the bear'. It was spring and Fred was away helping Fergie (N. Ferguson) at Belloy. She was home at Rahab (Codesa) with the boys. An old sow bear became exceedingly hungry after the long winter hibernation and decided a nice feed of fresh pork would taste pretty good, so into the barn and after the pigs she went. The boys, Bill, and Mel, rushed out to the barn - with Ethel in close pursuit - to quell the commotion (pigs squealing, dogs barking, chickens squawking, etc.). They succeeded in killing the bear in pitch darkness, emptying a couple of rifles in the process. Upon making an inspection the following morning, it was discovered that the bear had killed two weaner pigs, and partly eaten one. Then much to everyone's horror it was discovered that one of the bullets had penetrated through the barn wall and lodged in the neck of their most valuable brood sow, who with her litter of pigs was in a pen behind the barn. Fortunately she made a miraculous recovery.

The sons left in turn, to carve out a life of their own.

Bill went to Toronto to college, then to other Canadian cities for a very successful career with Trans Canada Airlines. He later returned to Belloy with his wife, Kitty, and two year old son, Fred. He purchased Scott's store and became a general merchant. They moved to Wanham in 1964, after fire destroyed their store and living quarters. Neighbors managed to save their car and boat. Once again the Lewis family were to be overwhelmed by the compassion and generosity shown by friends and people in general from all parts of the south Peace, including people they had never met. Even the school children rallied to the cause. To these kind people they are eternally grateful.

Fimrites Department Store in Wanham was purchased and Bill, Kitty and Fred, were back in store business.

Fred took his schooling in Belloy and Wanham, working in the store after school, weekends and summer holidays. After completing high school, he attended the Grand Prairie Regional College and the University of Alberta, Edmonton, where he graduated from the faculty of Commerce.

Fred married Peggy Connell, youngest daughter of Weller and Dorothy Connell, of Wanham, in 1969. They are parents to three daughters; Trina, Karla and Marci. They make their home at the Pacific Coast.

Mel served in the Merchant Marine in both Theatres of war, after which he continued as a deepsea engineer for eleven years. He then joined Gulf Oil as an engineer, and worked for 25 years with them in management and supervisory appointments in Vancouver. Mel still makes his home at the Pacific Coast with his wife Jeanne. They have one son, Kevin and a daughter, Reta (Mrs. Dennis Stevenson) and two grandchildren, Chellae and Tyson Stevenson.

Harvey married Marian Johns of Sexsmith, and moved to Niagara Falls to become a machinist in the Steel Mills. Later he joined the Niagara Falls Fire Department, where he still remains with the rank of Captain. Harvey and Marian have become true Easterners, and enjoy a full life in their home within sounds of the Falls. They have one



Lewis' Department Store in Wanham (formerly Fimrite's Department Store) Kitty Lewis, Virginia Heitrich at car.

daughter, Valerie.

Harold married Gail Giles of Spirit River. After a few years of banking and music, he settled into a career with Canadian Utilities and later with North Western Utilities, where he has long been in senior management. They have two daughters, Beverly and Susan (Mrs. Peter Duda), and one son Lindsey.

Bill, Mel, Harvey and Harold all attended school in the area; Codesa, Steele School and Wanham School. Bill attended Codesa, Steele and Wanham Schools before leaving for Toronto to further his education.

Mel attended Codesa and Steele Schools, later continuing his education in Calgary.

Harvey went to school in Codesa and Steele Schools, furthering his education after moving to eastern Canada.

Harold spent his school days at Belloy, Wanham and Spirit River, completing his education in Edmonton.

Fred and Ethel retired to Vancouver in 1963, where the lower altitude helped Fred's health. After ten good years, Fred passed away in 1973. Ethel is still well and at home in north Vancouver.

All the family will always fondly remember the happy years spent in the Peace River country, and especially the treasured friendships that still remain.

FRED LIND (Wanhamite)

Fred Lind was an early Wanhamite. He was a big Swede who walked into the Wanham area arriving on August 16, 1915. His first night was spent under a tree just south of what was for many years the McDonald place. Fred took this quarter as his homestead. In the summer of 1916 Fred bought a team of oxen from Grande Prairie. With the oxen he would haul water, two barrels at a time, on a stoneboat from the Prevost dam. Prevosts in the early days lived just south of the Wanham-Belloy Cemetery. Well, the first trip Fred made the mistake of leaving the stoneboat too near the edge of the bank. When the oxen started off the barrels upset. Poor Fred had to refill. Two days later he returned, left the outfit at the top of the bank. Packed the water all the way to the top and filled the barrels. Left for home.

Arrived home and remembered he had forgot to water the oxen at the dam. Proceeded to water the oxen from the barrels. It was a hot day and the oxen were thirsty; drank both barrels. Poor Fred had to return. After two months of water hauling, Fred decided to dig a dam of his own. He borrowed a wheelbarrow from Prevosts and dug a hole in a draw 25x70x5 feet. He finished the dam in November after 94 days of hard labor. Wore out the wheel on the barrow and returned it with a wooden one. The dam still exists. Fred stayed for a few years, tried a stint at trapping up north and finally returned to Sweden.

EMANUEL LITTMANN SR.

by Almeda Werner

Our dad, Emanuel Littmann, was born in Russia. As a child he had lived through a war, seen hunger and the terrible result of war. He had a dream in his heart - 'there must be a better way of life somewhere else'.

So when his brother Dave, (who had gone to Canada a few years before), wrote about Canada, he made up his mind to go.

Taking his wife Esther and 7 month old Alice, they set sail. They arrived at Halifax in September, 1927. Some weeks later they arrived at Leduc, Alberta, where Emanuel worked to pay off his fare to his uncle Ludwig Littmann, who sponsored the fare. In the summers he grubbed out stumps, stooked and worked at every job he could get. Wages were very low then. A second daughter, Almeda was born there.

In 1930 Dad bought some land at Thorhild, Alberta. He worked very hard there, in winter selling tamarack posts by sleigh. They never got a good crop there, as the land was low lying and frost was early. Two children were born, Huzella and Emanuel Jr.

Emanuel knew the Graumanns and his friend Adolf Peddy, who had a sister (Mrs. Ernest Boettcher). She wrote that there was land available in the Peace River country.

Once more they decided to move, packing everything in rail box cars - cows, geese, dog and machinery. The families, ours and Mary Peddy and little daughter, Rita Gilda (now Mrs. Harry Yuros), left for the Peace. Adolf Peddy and Dan Comm drove the horses and wagons. At Smith the cattle were fed and watered. Then Adolf Peddy rode with the cattle car, and Dad and Dan drove the horses.

CROSSING THE RIVER

They arrived at the Athabasca River in the evening. They were out of feed and the horses were tired. There was 4 feet of water on the river and ice high in the centre. What to do? They asked a farmer and he said, "Impossible!". As they were standing there, an Indian man came wading across the river. He said, "It's not safe, but if I were in your shoes, I'd try it." So Dan Comm and his team went first. With much urging the horses went in, their backs only showing. After what seemed a long time, they climbed up the other side of the river. Then Dad also crossed that unsafe river with his teams. God surely was



The Littman Family. Left to Right: Mr. Emmanuel Littman, Mrs. Littman, Alice (Werner), Almeda (Werner), Huzella (Sampsel) and Emmanuel, Jr.

their protection.

On the other side they got feed for the horses and spent the night. The trip from Thorhild to the Smokey took more than 2 weeks of steady travelling, arriving here May 9, 1935.

Adolf Peddy and families were met at Belloy by Ernest Boettcher. The store at Belloy was then owned by Maude and Ross Archibald. It was the first time we children ever were in a store. Our belongings were loaded on Mr. Sveinunggaard's wagon. At his place, we reloaded on to Mr. Ernest Boettcher's sleigh. The sleigh ahead and the cattle following behind, is the way we finally arrived at our Smoky destination.

We lived in Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Boettcher's yard, in the granary, for the summer. In the fall we moved into the two-roomed log cabin Dad had built during the summer, on a quarter of land he bought from Mr. Boettcher. Later he got another quarter of land.

SHINGLE MILL

In 1937 Dad built a shingle mill and all of us helped cut shingles. He operated this mill till 1943. Mother also helped cut shingles. In winter Dad logged for shingles. He walked to the bush, hacked 50 ties with the broad axe and walked back home again, many days in the winter.

Uncle Dave Littmann moved here with his family from Edmonton in 1938. They lived on the farm now owned by Ben Boettcher.

A church was built in our community. We all attended our Seventh-Day Adventist church school, which was operated in the basement of the church. Our whole family and grandchildren are all Seventh-Day Adventists.

Mother and Dad cut logs and hauled them to Peoria, to Mr. W.J. Rottacker's sawmill. We planed the lumber ourselves on Norman Ormiston's planer. When there was enough lumber, Dad built a new 2 storey house. We were happy to move in on New Year's Eve, in 35° below zero weather.

Dad worked in the bush, operating sawmills. He bought more land and later owned a dairy.

Mother and Dad had disappointments, fires, etc., but

their courage and health are good. They are now semi-retired, living part-time in Warburg, Alberta.

Emanuel Littmann Jr. bought the farm on which we first lived. He and his wife Fran (Wendland), son Cameron, two little girls, Colleen and Daina, still live there. Mother and Dad still come home for part time each year.

Alice, now Mrs. Elmer Werner, and Almeda, Mrs. Oscar Werner, live not far from the old home place. Huzella, Mrs. Ronald Sampsel, lives in Lacombe where her husband is principal of the College Heights S.D.A. church school.

ELVIN AND HANNA LITTMAN

We rented 6 quarters of land from the Helmer Brothers, 12 miles west of Millet, on 1/2 crop share delivered to the elevator, also the hay on 1/2 shares. Later on, they also wanted 1/2 of the cream cheques from our 12-15 cows that we were milking. It was then that we decided to start looking for something else. It was about that time that I heard about homesteads opening up in the Wanham area. I came up in October, 1956, and was able to get the W. 1/2 5-77-1-W6th.

We moved up in the spring of 1957, and were able to rent Orville Berg's land for the first years. In 1958 we bought the S.E. 1/4 17-76-1-W6th from Christine Teed, which we still call home.

The first year I was able to clear and break 120 acres. We worked many winters in bush camps. I was either falling trees or skidding trees with a Cat. Most of the winters I worked for Emmanuel Littmans', and in summer had more brush cut and piled, and then broke acre after acre.

Later on we acquired the N.W. 1/4 77-1-W6th, as an agriculture lease, which we also cleared and broke. I also spent many hours cutting and piling brush for others.

In the late 60's we started milking cows, shipping first cream, and then milk to Rycroft. In 1974-1975 we built a double 4 herring-bone milking parlor with free stall barn. We are shipping fluid milk to N.A.D.P. at Grande Prairie.

At present Larry Frape and I are in partnership at Dippey Dew Dairy Farm, milking between 50-60 cows and we raise heifer and bull calves.

Jerry, Lorraine, Marilyn and I played in the Spirit River Band for many years, under the leadership of Manny Mella.

We were married in 1949 and had 4 children.

Jerry is married to Ardella Anderson. They have one boy (Travis) and live in Calgary. Jerry works for Excelsior Life Insurance. He also has his journeyman papers as an exterior and interior decorator. Ardella works at the Land Titles Office.

Lorraine is married to Larry Frape. They have one girl (Charrissa) and are partners of Dippy Dew Dairy Farm. Lorraine also has her certificate for hair dressing.

Marilyn is married to Ed Wittemann and they are living in Calgary. She has a government job, typing, etc. Ed is painting and taking his second year of apprenticing.

Jerry, Lorraine and Marilyn, and their partners, have



Left to Right: Elvin, Hanna, Marilyn, Lorraine, Jerry and Dale.

all graduated from grade XII at the Canadian Union College, Lacombe.

Dale is 9 years old and attending Peace River Junior Academy at Peoria. He is in grade 3 and helps with chores, plays with his dog, Bruno and his 2 cats. He loves sliding down hills and ski-dooing.

Hanna suffered with cancer for 3-4 years and passed away in May, 1976. At present I am married to Ruth (Lang) Littman.

BILL AND GRACE LUNN

My dad, John Lunn, and brother Harv came up here in the summer of 1948 after hearing of the Lassiter project. They came here with Harv's Model-A Ford bringing along two neighbors also coming up to take homesteads. They filed on homesteads east of Codesa then came home to Austin, Manitoba, with glowing reports about this country. I tried unsuccessfully to get my brother's homestead as he decided not to come after all. So I came to Edmonton and drew lots for 6 parcels of land that came up in May of 1950. I was one of 13 who won on this draw.

I returned to Manitoba to finalize the sale of my farm and pay off the tractor then I loaded up my trailer with a 12' seed drill, 6' tiller, harrows, bed and bed clothes, canned goods and other odds and ends. I started west on my 1200 mile journey hoping to get here in time to put some crop in. I was on the road for five days but was not stopped once even though the road ban was on the highway all the way. I had some real experiences during my trip. I saw a terrific windstorm in Saskatchewan and a granary was smashed beside the highway right before my eyes.

SEE YOU LATER

Then north of Smith, a man driving a car passed me just as we topped a hill. He almost hit a truck coming from the other way. I pulled the clutch on the tractor on the way down the hill and picked up so much speed that I passed the car and his eyes almost bugged out of his head when he saw my tractor and trailer load go flying past

him. A few miles up the road he passed me again still shaking his head.

I slept three nights under the stars on the trailer and one night at Slave Lake where it cost me \$1.00 an hour to sleep. I slept for four hours and awoke to find everything at Slave Lake was covered with frost. That day I continued my journey and reached Watino. It was tricky manoeuvring my tractor and load down that steep hill and onto the ferry.

On arriving at Codesa, I asked where my farm was and I was told it was located one mile west of Codesa. I couldn't get there as there was too much water and mud and no trail to my farm. The first neighbor I met was Stan Horn and he let me go across his farm to get to mine from the other side.

I left the trailer on the farm then went looking for my neighbors to the west, the Hunt brothers. Ross Hunt had drawn on his homestead the same day as I drew for mine, so we had made arrangements to work together that spring. His old Nash car was our sleeping quarters for the spring as seeding had already started where it was dry enough. Ross Hunt, Roy Hunt and his wife Elsie, Bill Darbyson and his wife Ruby and Press Roberts had set up camp on the Darbyson place. Press and Bill had a Rockall tractor, Hunts didn't have a tractor at this time but bought one later, an old Pacemaker Massey (Wallace).

EASY IF YOU KNOW HOW

The first afternoon out the tractor stopped, it had run out of fuel and Roy had to walk home. The second day out with his tractor he broke the back axle and the wheel fell off. When he couldn't get the axle out of the wheel, he decided to heat it up. He took the steel wheel and set it on a root pile and piled more roots on the wheel and lit it on fire.

When we looked out across the field after dinner, the whole windstrip was burning and that was where the tractor was sitting. We rushed over there on my tractor and the fire had gone right under his tractor and burnt all the grass but hadn't done any damage to his tractor even though the old carburetor was dripping gas. This never daunted Roy, he just said, "That axle will drive out easy now,". Nothing ever worried him. He jumped down and ran over to the wheel and hit it once with the hammer and out the axle fell.

Another time Press Roberts and Bill Darbyson had their bags of registered Saunders piled up on a hill south of the track on Ross Hunt's farm, so when they were ready to seed they had to use the team of horses (Dan Patch and Lightning) and wagon to bring the seed across a slough and over the railroad tracks. Press loaded twelve bags of seed then went across the slough to the track where the old team got balky or cold shouldered, as some



The Lunn Family. Top to Bottom: Sandra, Betty, Johnny, Grace, Bill, Heather, Marlene, Linda, Jerry and Patsy.

people call it. They just stopped when they got to the track so he had to unload the bags and carry them across the track and pile them there. When he picked up the last bag and carried it across the track, the team followed him with the empty wagon. About this time the air was blue.

That summer Roy Hunt got his Hudson Terra-plane car high-centered on the railroad track. He couldn't get it off so he left it there and walked home hoping to collect the insurance when the train hit it. Much to his consternation, when the train did come along, they stopped and got the passengers off the train to push his car off the tracks with no damage done. So all his plans of what to do with the insurance money fell through.

Another day, while we were having a coffee, we heard a noise outside. We had been picking roots with the old team on the root wagon and left them standing outside. Something scared them and away they went around the house and hit the stove Roy Hunt had bought at a sale. 'It rolled nearly on top of the railroad tracks, as we lived right beside them, and totally demolished it. The old team pulled out full tilt down the road and I went after them on the tractor. I caught up to them as they crossed the railroad 1/2 mile east, so I waited until Roy arrived. Then he said I'll race you home and as he was pretty peeved about the stove, he really laid the lines to the old team.

Around the end of June of 1950, I went back to Manitoba by train to reacquaint myself with my wife and eight month old son, John, who was born October 29, 1949, in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. I received a letter from Belloy U.G.G. agent, E. Larson, who suggested not bothering to return as they had had a big snowstorm (18 inches of snow) in August. Then I received another letter in September from Ross Hunt saying my oats were higher than the top of the car and to hurry and come for the harvest.

So I loaded up Grace, Johnnie and Pete Brown in the car (a 1936 Chev) and drove home to the Peace River

country. Grace wondered what on earth sort of a farm I was bringing her to, the closer we got the rougher the country looked. Our first sight of the oat crop was fantastic to what we had expected to see. It was frozen, of course, but still ran 50 bushels an acre.

We, Grace, Johnnie and myself, lived in a granary at Hunt's for three to four days until we built our own granary which we lived in then for the fall. Grace's main concern was where we'd get our water from. I was mortified when they told me to just go outside and scoop water out of the slough. The staple of our diet for the fall consisted of wild duck roasted, stuffed or, just for variety, fried and with Press Roberts' good hunting we had deer meat.

We did all our cooking on a wood stove which we fueled by going out into the fields and picking roots. We ate all our meals together with Press Roberts, Bill and Ruby Darbyson. Ruby and I cooked together.

The harvest of 1950 will never be forgotten. We had 1 1/2 feet of snow in August then 2 feet of snow on the stooks in late October and 22 below zero. Our neighbors to the west, Don and Gordon Kennedy, had seeded wheat on the 15th of June and took off 45 bushels to the acre on the last field they seeded. Other neighbors to the north, John and Peter Noga, thought we were crazy seeding that late in the spring.

When our old threshing machine broke down in October, John Noga offered to come with his machine and use my tractor on it for \$50.00 a day. Today you couldn't hire a man alone for that pay. He sure helped us out of a bind but what a motley crew! Curly Squires, Pete Brown, Luiger Bouchard, Tom Bergeaus, Bill Darbyson, Press Roberts, and John Noga running the machine.

We were concerned about trying to keep Johnnie up off the cold floor. He celebrated his first birthday that fall. We made him a cake but had no candle for it. Press Roberts got him to walk that night by bribing him with a chocolate bar. We loaded a boxcar of oats and took an advance on it which gave us enough money to pay up our store bill, fuel bill, the harvesters and had enough money left to pay for gas to go back to Manitoba for the winter and a job in a garage.

In the spring of 1951 we loaded the rest of our things; combine, plow, bedroom suite, kitchen suite, kitchen stove, wood and coal heater, crib, baby carriage and venetian blinds (that we didn't know where to hang in our granary). We travelled up by car in April through flooded areas in Tilley, Saskatchewan. The roads were all covered with water and they had stakes sticking out of the water to show where the road was. Then we found it was posted that the ferry at Watino was not working as the river was too high so we had to travel around by Grande Prairie. We stayed at Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Blois's for a couple weeks while Bill and Pete Brown built our 12' by 24', two-roomed home.

In early May we moved in, planted a garden, picked roots, then seeded our crop. Pete Brown and I caught a little moose in the railroad fence and gave it a drink of water. We took some pictures before letting it go. With summer came our second child August 14, 1951. Ross Hunt had told us when the time came he'd take us up to Spirit River in his new Studebaker truck. So at sup-



Bill Lunn with Marlene on the tractor he drove west from Manitoba.

per time we headed for the hospital. The trails were very rough and Ross put a cigarette in his mouth only to find when we arrived at Spirit River that he'd eaten the whole cigarette.

Grandma Blois looked after Johnnie for us while I was in the hospital. She took him to the saskatoon patch with her after which he developed a bad case of the "saskatoon two-step". When we came home from the hospital with Sandra we stayed with Mrs. Blois for about a week. The goodness and helpfulness of neighbors in those days was phenomenol. Then when I came home a good neighbor, Betty Nordvie, came and helped me do some canning. Not much work from the garden since it all froze. This was a poor year as our crop froze again worse than in 1950. Bill went out custom swathing and combining for the fall. We were hopeful for a good water supply next year as Pete Blomert dug us a dugout in late fall.

We stayed here for that winter and spent Christmas with Grandma and Grandpa Blois. I was anxiously looking forward to spring when the diapers wouldn't freeze stiff. Bill built a barn that winter and started into the hog business, not a very profitable venture but at least a change of diet from duck, deer and moosemeat.

1952 was another disaster. We were froze out and nearly starved out, except for wildlife, but Bill again went out doing custom swathing and combining. That summer we bought a team of horses from Jim Watson from Wanham. Most of the time they were used for transporting us around visiting or to town for supplies or mail in wintertime. There was no problem with anyone needing to diet in those days, our biggest problem was buying a belt with enough holes to last the winter. Of course it helped my being pregnant that year. Our second daughter, Betty, was born December 19, 1952, in Spirit River. I remained in the hospital over Christmas and first met the Leriger's as Terry had Peter Christmas Day while I was still in the hospital.

Our house was still the same size when Bill's brother, Jim and family, moved up and lived with us until their own home was built. There were nine of us living in our two-roomed mansion, just a little crowded. They built their house in our yard and lived there for several years before moving to Tangent. Weather was good that winter. Melting snow for wash water had only one ad-

vantage that I can remember, the diapers stayed nice and white.

The spring of 1953 was more promising. I had high hopes of getting a decent garden. We spent the better part of the spring trying to find a dry spot to set Betty down on while the rest of us "happily" picked roots. This was our best year so far, I had a good garden, the berries were plentiful and we spent many hours picking and canning for the winter ahead.

We had many good friends in our bachelor neighbors who often visited and who were partial to my homemade bread and fried chicken. Spud Martin was a particular favorite of our children and on Sandra's birthday in 1953 he brought a little red wagon for her and a tricycle for Johnnie. Those two toys gave many hours of fun to all our children. We had a real good crop that year and Bill bought a new combine and he custom combined a lot of acres again that fall. We also bought a new car and were thrilled at leaving the homestead and going to Manitoba for Christmas.

1954 was another fair year and I was farming more land. Our third daughter, Patsy, was born that November and the boiling water and washing diapers started all over again. It was only by the Grace of God and the family allowance cheque that we survived some of those first years. We will always be grateful to Scotts as they had the store in Belloy and let us charge our groceries until we could sell some grain or livestock.

We built an addition onto our home making it 22' by 24' and Grace was very happy about having her housecleaning workload increased. John Noga told us how to churn butter the easy way. While I was out in the field working, we would just tie the cream can onto the disc and it would soon be butter. It sure was easier than using the butter churn.

For entertainment in those days we spent our winters leafing through the Eaton's and Simpsons catalogs, wondering when 'The New Dress' would come. Instead we ordered a cream separator. A person had to keep their priorities straight then. Baking bread with jackpine roots was no easy feat, the oven was either a warm 200 degrees or a very hot 500 degrees. So the bread was usually either a little doughy or burnt black around the edges.

The spring outings consisted of visiting the neighbors and comparing each other's kids growth rate for the winter. The summer of 1955 we got a road to the north so we started getting our mail in Codesa and that September our son Johnnie started school in Codesa. His grade one teacher was Joan Sather and as there was a rabies scare that year we would watch closely as he walked the 1 1/2 miles to school. He would walk down the railroad track and every once in a while would get a ride on the handcar with the roadmaster which delighted him.

Gene Morin, the Codesa elevator agent, and I played hockey with the Spirit River rangers for a couple of years in the winters of '1955-'1956. At this time the curling rink was the main attraction in Belloy. As high as 28 rinks curling in the square draw. This winter we were struck with the measles. All four kids had them and Johnnie and Patsy were both admitted to the hospital as they were both so sick with them. This was the first time any of our children had been sick.

1956 was another ordinary year. Our friend and family physician, Dr. Law, was called on once again in August to deliver another daughter, Linda. Washing diapers this time was nicer as we had the power put in previously and being able to prepare bottles ahead of time and keep them in the fridge was a real treat too.

The next year started out quite good but by harvest time things didn't look so good, all the low land was under water and fields were completely saturated so not too much grain was taken off that fall. Most of the grain was combined in the spring of 1958 and a very poor grade at that. 1958 was a dry year and poor crop as summerfallow was not so good from the previous year.

Gerry was born that October and when we came home from the hospital there had been a terrific snow and windstorm and most of the roads were blocked so we had to go way around by Codesa to get home. Next spring we started building on our new house. Several good neighbors attended the bee to pour the cement for the basement. Clarence Nordvie helped with the drywalling and "Speedy Wire Service" (Don Berner) helped with the wiring for electricity. The biggest treat for us all was having the water works in our new house and being able to turn the tap to fill the tub with warm water and pull the plug when we were done. It sure beat heating the water and carrying it to the old tub then scooping it all out to throw outside. We were hoping the novelty of flushing the toilet wore off before the kids ran the dugout dry.



Bill, Grace, Sandra, Jerry and Johnnie with baby moose, 1950.

As time went on, neighbors kept moving out. The next few years were quite good years and in August, 1963, Marlene was born. We now had seven of a family. Realizing Marlene needed a playmate, we added our final child another daughter, Heather, in July, 1964, making a family of eight. Our neighbors were always so good to us whenever we had a baby, this was never more apparent as when we had Heather. Grace was very sick with phlebitis and for three months Bertha Melnyk kept Marlene and Connie Wilfred kept Heather. These acts of kindness endeared these people to our whole family and were great examples to us all of what good friends really are.

TURKEY AND PORK

I can remember a few days before Christmas a few years back Nordvie's had bought two turkeys and hung

them up in the porch. Bill and Pearl Sallis came to visit them and they were gone someplace, Bill took the two turkeys and shot a couple of pigeons, plucked them and hung them up in their place. They also left a note for Clarence on the pigeons saying, "The turkeys are sure small this year eh!"

Another episode to remember was one night Walt Hillaby and I went to Eaglesham and Bill Sallis had had a pork butchered by Paul Rochon and had loaded the packaged and frozen pork into the trunk of his car. Then Bill went into the bar for a beer before he went home. Of course he had left the key in the car, so we unloaded all the pork except the pork hocks into Walt Hillaby's car and went in to enjoy a drink with Bill Sallis. I guess he sure was shocked when he went out in the morning at home to find the pork all gone.

As the years went by, we had some good times and good years. More neighbors left, sold out and went to greener fields. The old curling rink in Belloy was closed down and we built a ski hill south of Belloy, Birch Hills Ski Club, a great place to have fun for the family. That first year we had many casualties on the hill, our family included, Gerry broke his leg the second day he skied there.

Throughout their school years, our children were all involved in several 4-H Clubs and many extracurricular school sports activities. Over the years, Bill was involved in coaching several hockey teams which instilled an avid interest in this sport in all our family. In the following years Johnnie, Sandra, Betty, Patsy, Linda, and Gerry all graduated from Eaglesham school. In September of 1970, Sandra married Bill Bennett and they and their three children live on the farm near Wanham. Then in 1974, Patsy married Darrell Urness and they live with their two boys in Sexsmith.

Johnnie had taken an agricultural course in Fairview College for two years where he was a member of the college hockey team. Later when he had purchased a farm and taken up farming with his dad he continued with his favorite sport, by playing hockey for the Rycroft Raiders.

The first tragedy to actually involve a family member was on Heather's birthday when Johnnie was drowned in Washington Lake along with his cousin Roy while they were on holiday on July 30, 1974. It made our whole family proud when the Rycroft Raiders presented an annual trophy for "sportsmanship and dedication" in Johnnie's memory. That was an extremely tough season to go through but once again a lot of good friends and neighbors pitched in and helped us out for which we were very thankful.

The next year, 1975, was the first year we got a trainee through International Agricultural Exchange Association program and most people in the district remember him as he was a plowman who won a few trophies at our local plowing match to take back to Denmark with him. Helge Hansen was his name and he sure helped us over that first year without Johnnie on the farm.

In 1978 we started building the house we are now living

in on the farm south of Belloy, the George Gilmour farm, which we had purchased in 1970. We moved into our new home in January, 1979, making it easier for Marlene and Heather who had previously enrolled in Wanham school.

Gerry married Linda Young in November, 1979, and they moved into the house on the homestead at Codesa where they now farm. Betty resides in Peace River where she is employed in a bank. Linda lives in Drayton Valley where she works in a government office. Marlene and Heather hope to graduate from Wanham school in the future. As our family unit grows smaller we look forward to spoiling more grandchildren, a privilege all grandparents share.

It is nice to be able to sit and go over our experiences of the past 30 years in the Peace River country and know that, given the opportunity, we would choose to go through these good and hard times all over again.

MARING, OLE

by Sam Parlee

Ole Maring was a Scandinavian bachelor. His land was located on the north bank of Kadot Creek.

Shortly after he had filed on his land, he had to be away for two years. In his absence a huge fire had drastically changed the landscape and he was unable to find his land when he returned. Naturally neighbors came to his assistance.

Ole was a perfectionist even in the way he cleared land. Rather than just pulling the stumps, he would follow each root to its source and grub it out.

In later years. Ole sold his land to Fred Bennett and retired in Grande Prairie.

MacDONALD, GEORGE AND OLIVE

by Norma (MacDonald) Proudfoot

In February of 1919, George MacDonald returned from First World War active service overseas. In mid March of that year he and his uncle, Bill McLean, went to the Peace River Country to look over land for settlement. They stopped at Wanham, where they arranged with Lawrence Leriger for a tour of the country. Lawrence, or Larry as he was called, was already settled on land where the Village of Wanham now stands and was a great booster for this new country, anxious to assist any new settlers who arrived. This trip presented some challenges, taking them through much virgin country, still buried under the winter's snow.

The only trail across the Birch Hills was one running south from the town of Belloy, another stop on the Edmonton-Dunvegan and British Columbia (E.D. and B.C.) Railway, just east of Wanham. The trail was fairly good, as far as McCrimmon's Mill. From there it was just a pack trail, used mostly by Indians and Bob Starrat, the only settler in the area that was later called Peoria.

George tells his own story:

"We stopped overnight with Bob, his wife and their children. Next morning we took one of Bob's horses and we three scouts rode, or slid, across Kadot Creek. There was no water in the creek but the gorge was about 500



Norma MacDonald's Wedding. Left to Right: Mr. and Mrs. Proudfoot, Bob, Norma, Olive and George.

feet deep! We finally arrived at our destination. The country was fairly level with patches of bush. Rocky areas and soil-type were hidden from the eye by two and a half feet of snow.

Mrs. Leriger had packed a lunch for us and did it ever taste good! But Larry had a surprise in store.

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment in those early days depended almost entirely on the originality, ingenuity, imagination, and natural wit of the participants. George was often called upon to M.C. special events. His voice was familiar as the auctioneer of the hand-sewn, knitted, and crocheted goods at the famous chicken suppers, put on by the women of the little Presbyterian Church, in locating buyers for the intriguing, often beautifully wrapped lunch boxes at the box socials, as caller of square dances and special mixer dances, and as Santa Claus at the Christmas concerts.

Olive had different talents. She served as organist of the Knox Church for many years. The performance her children hold dear in their memories was the duet she sang with Robert Sawers called, 'The Crooked Bawbee.'

There was alot of family fun in those early days. The community sports day was fun for everyone. Gordon played on the hardball team, and Ethel and Margaret played on the ladies' softball team. Even raspberry picking in the Birch Hills took on fun dimension when organized as a picnic.

BEAR IN THE BERRY PATCH

One special memory was the day Laura Tansem met the 'bear.' Laura was short and was having trouble reaching those lovely berries at the top of some branches.

All of a sudden George came upon her and decided to have some fun. He was tall enough to reach above the very branches Laura was picking, and began roughly pushing the branches about. Laura's attention was caught just as George gave a loud snort and took big steps as if through the bushes at her.

Laura could move quickly when she needed to, and move she did, scrambling over a huge log and falling down the other side of it, to completely disappear in the dense undergrowth! Several pairs of hand helped her to her feet and recovered her spilled berries. Laura was so relieved when she realized there was no bear, she readily forgave George for the fun he'd had at her expense.

The Sunday School Camp along the Burnt River was always an event, not only for the children. One year, after several consecutive days of rain, parents began to worry. Three cars set out from Wanham to see how the kids were doing. The first one didn't get very far. The second one, driven by Elmer Hill, made it as far as the Stepianiuk farm. The third one, George MacDonald's Durant, made it to within about one mile of camp. The welcome he received, from campers and staff alike, as he rounded that last hill was equal to that of a modern-day TV hero.

Christmas was always a big celebration. It was the time to collect all those who didn't have families with which to enjoy it. Oscar Oakleaf spent most of his Christmases with the MacDonalds, riding all those miles on the back of old "Baldie", his white-faced riding pony. One year it was 45 degrees below zero when Oscar, with only his eyes showing through the layers of warm wraps, turned his horse up the lane. It was the tall shot of good Scotch Whiskey George gave Oscar, that revived him that day.

In the early days, Art Campbell and Pete Anderson came on Christmas Eve to help with the Santa Claus role and stay overnight. In the later years, Christmas was often shared with Walter and Sue Francis and family.

Blanche Cameron often spent the day with the family, and it was on her that George played one of his best jokes. She had prepared the turkey for stuffing and roasting on Christmas Day, which was then put outside in the shack until needed. On the morning before Christmas Day, George came in from doing the chores and casually moved over to the window.

"What is that the dog has out there in the snow?" he asked.

Blanche was first at the window. "It's the turkey," she screamed.

In her bedroom slippers and bare legs, she ran out the door and through the snow to the rescue. Imagine her chagrin when she discovered Mike was enjoying the shank bone of the moose George had shot earlier that winter. It took a lot of nerve for her to return to the kitchen where George was completely enjoying his prank. Even Blanche had to laugh, but before she did so she expounded to anyone who would listen:

"George MacDonald will never grow up!"

HIDING THE EVIDENCE

Eli Barrett, another colorful bachelor in the area, often a Christmas guest and a frequent member of a bridge foursome at the MacDonald home, farmed about a half mile east of the school. Eli had another talent - he knew how to brew moonshine. Once, when he had a batch on the brew in an oak cask in his shack, the moccasin telegraph brought him word the Police were on their way down from Spirit River by horseback. Eli had to get rid of that moonshine!

Across the road from Barrett's place lived Louis Tansem. Barrett borrowed a team of horses and a stoneboat from Louis, loaded the oak cask on the stoneboat and headed north on the logging trail. Way out in the north woods where the logging had been taking place, he unloaded the cask, hid it in a brushpile and went to Eaglesham to visit friends.

Meanwhile, Art Campbell and Frank Gray, knowing Barrett had moonshine on the brew, came to the shack. They found both Barrett and the moonshine gone, but the stoneboat track heading north told them all they needed to know. They followed the trail. Finding the cask, they broke it open and settled down to a good tasting session. Great plans were laid as to how they were going to bring the moonshine out and hold a party. But, the moonshine took effect before the plans had a chance to materialize! As for Eli Barrett, he missed both the Police and the party.

The MacDonald farm was two and a half miles from the school, so getting to school often presented problems. Mostly the children walked. Ole Tansem was always in view when they passed, to wave a friendly greeting to them. He used to say that he set his clock to their passing each morning, it was that regular. Margaret, the first to go off to school, would often stay with Aunt Blanche Cameron, who lived close to the school. Gordon was able to handle a horse, so the two of them rode Buster to school. Buster became a bit of a legend in the com-

munity. He was afraid of cars and terrified of threshing machines, but gentle enough at most times and easily caught wherever he was, at time of need. A year later Ethel started school and Buster had three passengers. Legend would have it that when Norma started school, everyone moved up a notch so she could ride on the tail.

In 1945, when Gordon returned from active service during World War II, he and his new bride, Phyllis (Morrow), wished to try the farm life. George and Olive took a respite from the farm. Norma was attending University and Ethel was working as a teller at the Canadian Bank of Commerce in Edmonton, so it seemed opportune for them to buy a home in Edmonton. While there, George became an active member of the VLA, and was personally involved with the settling of many a returned man on the farmlands of the Peace River Country. Every spring, as soon as it was feasible to do so, George wended his way back to Wanham, where he helped put that year's crop in. One of his first letters home read, 'I am back in God's country. I stood out on the back porch last night and listened to the silence.'

Gordon's stint on the farm gave him the urge to try it on his own. He and Phyllis built a home and moved onto their own land, which was the original homestead of Edward Prevost, Sr. Jim and Margaret (MacDonald) Watson took over the home farm.

After three years in Edmonton, George and Olive came back to Wanham, this time buying a homey little bungalow on the north slope of the hill, just south of Wanham. With the acquisition of some cultivated acres, he bought from the original holdings of Pete Tansem, George continued to pursue one of the greatest loves of his life - farming the land and tilling the soil. It didn't take long for the MacDonalds to resume their lives in the community.

GORDON'S PLANE DOWN

In November, 1953, when Gordon was piloting a mercy flight from Grande Prairie with a polio patient and the doctor on board, their Cessna 180 flew into icing conditions over the Whitecourt area and crashed, taking with it the lives of the three men. In spite of great efforts on the part of many people - Ground Search Crews, Air Search and Rescue Crews, individuals, neighbors and friends who searched with George himself, the wreckage of the plane was not found until a year later. It was through this time of greatest need that the love and loyalty of family, friends, and neighbors meant so much to the MacDonald's, something never to be forgotten.

In 1960, George and Olive retired from farming and moved away from their beloved Peace River Country to the milder climes of White Rock, BC. Here they made a new life for themselves, but often enjoyed the visits of old friends. Each year they returned to be reunited with family and friends. It was on one such visit, in 1970, that Olive passed away to her eternal rest, at the Grande Prairie hospital.

George, with his wife, Phyllis, still lives in his home in White Rock, enjoying good health and much happiness. Each year he grows a good garden, the produce of which

he shares with others. On February 24th, 1979, he celebrated his eighty-ninth birthday, surrounded by his children: Margaret, Mrs. James Watson, of Spirit River; Ethel, Mrs. Fred Miller, of Owen Sound, Ontario; Norma, Mrs. Robert Proudfoot, of Edmonton; and daughter-in-law, Phyllis, Mrs. Palmer Peterson, of Edmonton. He has twenty-one grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE

"You haven't tasted anything yet," Larry insisted. "Just wait till you get a cup of coffee brewed out in the open over a wood fire, with melted snow."

The orders were to clear off a patch of snow, get a good fire going and erect a tripod, on which to hang the coffee can. This was all accomplished. The coffee can was hung over the blazing fire and the three warriors stood around with their tongues hanging out. Finally a sort of pungent odor penetrated the fresh air. Larry had dumped the coffee into the can and packed the snow on top. The coffee burned before the snow melted. This is one story we never forgot and we never allowed Larry to forget either."

McLean and MacDonald continued to the Land Titles Office in Grande Prairie where George filed by proxy for his two brothers, Peter and Norman, in what later became known as the Heart Valley District. They could each take a half section of crown land as returned men. McLean filed on a half section each for himself and his son, Jack, where they made their home for many years. George, who had exhausted his homesteading rights before going into the service, could only file on a quarter section NW of 36, T.77, R.3 W of 6 M in the Wanham area.



MacDonald farm home - 1929.

SAVING THE COOK

George tells the following story:

"In passing, I should repeat the story told by Rod McCrimmond, the operator of the sawmill south of Belloy where we spent the one night. Rod was a big, good-natured chap but was always having trouble with his men. Whenever Bill Trumpower turned out a good batch of moonshine, the camp was wide open for a

couple of days. The Chinese cook, Wong Loo, took much abuse, both verbal and otherwise, until things got back to normal. Wong finally pulled off his apron and said, "Me quit!"

This left things in a chaotic condition at the mill, as cooks were hard to get. Rod called the men together and pleaded with them to go easy on the cook and treat him more kindly in the future. This they all promised to do, but Wong was not pleased with the situation and demanded proof of their sincerity. Rod brought him to the meeting so he could direct his demands at the men.

"You no kick me any mo'. You no thlow prates at me any mo'. You no call me go-to-hell any mo'!" requested Wong. All the men agreed unanimously so Wong said, "All rike. We all be good fliends and me no pee in soup any mo'."

George MacDonald worked at the building trade at Grande Prairie during the summer of 1919. He returned to Edmonton on the first of July to marry his old girl friend, Olive Webster, who was teaching school in Edmonton at the time. The wedding ceremony, conducted by Rev. McQueen of First Presbyterian Church, took place on July 3rd, and the MacDonalds left for Grande Prairie that evening by ED & BC railway. They built a house for themselves in Grande Prairie, but never lived in it. The house was rented by Ed Line who remained a tenant for 26 years. There was not much building going on during the winter months in those days, so the MacDonalds had two alternatives: George could join the Alberta Provincial Police (APP) or go homesteading at Wanham. They chose the latter, to make money fast, of course, and because Olive's sister, Mrs. Duncan (Blanche) Cameron, was living at Wanham.

On October 6th, the MacDonald's packed their bags and travelled to Cameron's place, where Olive was to remain for awhile. George left the next day for Edmonton, where he would purchase a carload of settler's effects and building supplies for his new home.

The S.S.B., like all government schemes, was slow to function. George was grateful, during his wait in Edmonton, to his old friend and best man at the wedding, Dan McLeod, for making his stay more pleasant. It was the middle of November, there was a foot of snow on the ground, before George arrived back with four horses, a kitchen range, a wagon, sleighs and the material with which to build a four room house. Oh, yes! He also brought a dozen cases of over-ripe fruit. The trip from Edmonton had taken over a week on the ED & BC railway, being side-tracked to let passenger trains through, as well as to take the horses on and off for exercise and watering, because there was not sufficient supply on board for the journey.

The next step was to get the house built, which was accomplished with the help of Duncan Cameron. It was not finished but ready to move into before Christmas. The remainder of the winter was spent getting logs for the barn, chicken house and pig house. Soon a family came to bless the MacDonald home. Margaret was born in June of 1920, Gordon and Ethel were born during the next two years and, eventually Norma arrived to make the family complete.

Neighbors were important in those early days. Fred

Lind, a bachelor to the south, left his land for the adventurous life of a trapper in the far north. George bought his quarter section from him and farmed it along with his own. The first few news reports from Fred were prosperous, and a beautiful Arctic fox pelt arrived as a gift for Olive. Eventually, however, communications stopped and the fox pelt, too elegant and expensive to be made into a fur piece, lay carefully wrapped in the attic beside the gorgeous wide-brimmed wedding hat, hand-fashioned by an Edmonton milner.

A man by the name of Ward was also selling his land and George bought a half section from him. This land was far to the west, south of the school, quite a journey from the home place.



Margaret and Gordon MacDonald.

THE IRISH NEIGHBOR

The neighbor to the west of George and Olive was a colorful bachelor, an Irishman from Newfoundland called Mike Shannon. George had a story about Mike ...

"Mike had been in the Army Forestry Corps. He couldn't read or write his name, but was fortunate to have probably the best half section of land in the district. He was never married and never wished to be. He built a medium sized log shack, that was neither round or square but was quite a comfortable home for Mike and a dozen hens. The bed, too, was built to his own specifications with a high foot suitable for the hens to roost on at night. The last chore before going to bed each night was to turn the hens so they pointed outward. This was for sanitary reasons which were very strict in the Shannon abode. Mike derived much pleasure from the hens and called them all by name. One old hen, whose name was Bridget, was a real favorite, claimed by her owner to be a layer of at least two eggs a day. He also claimed that the hens were more profitable than children as they kept him supplied with eggs, the rooster awakened him each morning as he had no timepiece, and none of them wet the bed."

A TRIP TO THE POLICE

"When Margaret was born and Olive was still in the



Ethel MacDonald

hospital at Grande Prairie, Mike drove his team and the big wagon through the bush trail to visit me. (There was no other road going east in those days except the trail through Mike's bush and across the fields to our place.) Mike was in a bad way that day. Everyone was at him. People were stealing his horses out of the pasture at night and riding them to death; others were travelling across his land late at night and leaving his gate open; still others were making fun of the way he lived. He could hear them laughing at him late at night. Mike was so riled up that he was on his way to Spirit River to report to the Police.

Those were the days before the wells on the hill had been tapped and there was no good drinking water in the country. Almost everyone made his own brew to drink and everyone had his own recipe. I had some beer ready for drinking and, feeling sorry for poor old Mike, offered him a glass.

"That would be just right, Garge," said Mike, with a pleased look on his face.

I poured him a tall glass. The beer was cold and Mike licked his lips. Hoping to pacify him and save him the long trip to Spirit River, I asked, "Would you like another one, Mike?"

"Aye. That I would, Garge, that I would," Mike agreed.

Mike was seated high on the spring seat of the wagon and it took some effort for me to reach up the glass of beer to him. Mike swallowed it quickly and with gusto. "Now I'm drunk, Garge. Take me home!" he said.

I had to drive Mike home, look after his team and himself, then walked the half mile back."

The Tansem family lived on farms around the MacDonald home; Ole and Clifford to the north, west and southwest and Hjalmer to the northeast. The St. Pierres were immediately east. There was a satisfying giving-receiving relationship with these neighbors. Olive exchanged afternoon visits with the wives, as well as loaves of homemade bread, pounds of butter and special preserves. Neighbors depended on each other in times of need. Numerous trips, some of them urgent, were made by George MacDonald, transporting sick people to Spirit River or Grande Prairie hospitals. Some long stretches of road tended to become plugged with snowdrifts, in which it was possible to be stuck for hours before help could be located. Summertime had its deep-rutted mudholes and the grassy spot at the base of the Burnt River Hill often provided an overnight stopping place while travellers

waited for slippery mud to dry. As the small community grew, buildings were erected, including the school, hall, and Presbyterian Church. George, with his previous experience as a carpenter, contributed his share of the work on these projects. He acted as chairman of the School Board for eight years, during most of which time Olive was secretary.

THE BAD HEART COUNTRY

by Norman B. MacDonald

The Bad Heart Country, speaking mostly of the country by that name north of the River:

First settlers in that part arrived in 1919 and 1920. They consisted of: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Pearson and Nancy, born in November, 1919; Mr. and Mrs. Howard Meadus and their daughter, Paddy; Mr. Peter McNie and Peter junior; A.E. Cox; Mr. Frank Mitchell; William McWhirter, commonly known as Scotty; Frank Smith; Don Morrison; William McLean; John McLean; Alex MacDonald; Peter MacDonald; Norman MacDonald; Percy Close; Jim Munro; Adam Baynes, who got out logs for a house and hewed them, but never came back; Mr. and Mrs. Noble Johnston with Francis and Arthur; Art Bryant; Perry Peebles; Mr. and Mrs. Harold Peebles; Art Peebles; and Walters.

The first settlers came into the Bad Heart Country from three different directions: from Belloy by Starratt's crossing on Kakut Creek; from Spirit River by Burnt River and Kakut Lake. Viercants at Burnt River and Gulicks at Kakut Lake were ever-welcome stopping places. Starratts were on the Belloy route.

The winter of 1919 and 1920 was considered to be the worst on record for severity. The winter's snow came on the 20th of October, while the stooks were still on the fields, and much of the snow was still in piles in sheltered places on the 10th of May, 1920.

Needless to say, the creeks and rivers were raging torrents when spring arrived. There were few bridges in the country, and the few that existed could not stand the rush of water.

GONE TO THE ARCTIC

Albert Cox lost his wagon in the Burnt River, and just managed to get to shore with his horses. One wagon wheel was never found and was believed to be rolling its way to the Arctic.

Another young man, Nobby Clark, saw the result of several weeks work float by his democrat and go bobbing and rolling down stream. His main regret was that he was not astride his keg of moonshine with a straw in the bung, where he might have soothed his grief with the joywater.

THE PLATINUM RUSH OF 1921

Jim Munro spread the word of the discovery of the find further up stream on the Smoky River banks. So, if up stream, why not where we were we reasoned. The indication to look for was pieces of shale, high up on the

cut bank. The precious metal was folded in the shale in sticks, like a lead pencil, with the sought after metal, if present, forming the lead inside. The metal should be white.

One pleasant October morning a group consisting of Jim Munro, Mr. O. Toftner, Scotty McWhirter and myself, set off down the valley of the Bad Heart for the Smokey. Mr. Toftner, the oldest one of the group (probably in his late 60's), was never-the-less very much enthused with the prospects, although the travelling was rough.

There were places where the cutbank was nearly 600 feet high, but the earth formation varied so it held one's interest.

This was followed by groups from far and near, a number of them staking claims.

Someone sent away a sample and the assayer sent back the report: 'iron pyrites, fools gold'.

Some of the local self-styled geologists of that time didn't intend to be fooled that easily, perhaps by some inexperienced assayer using his own test to prove his verdict.

After freezeup that fall, Don Morrison was awakened one morning by a group of men wanting to know how much further they could go with the car. They said that they were on their way to the Smoky. Don said he looked at the car, then rubbed his eyes and looked again - then said, "When you managed to get this far with the car, there is nothing to stop you from going the rest of the way!" Some of the gears on the Model-T were badly burnt and they had to haul it back to Spirit River behind old Dobbin.

The shale and fossilized strata of the Smoky banks still hold their secret.

HECTOR McFAYDEN

by Sam Parlee

Hector McFayden homesteaded S.E. 3-75-3 on June 14th, 1927. He and Mrs. McFayden carried on a mixed farming operation along with a certain amount of carpenter work to supplement their income. He also did some logging at times.

Mr. and Mrs. McFayden had a very effective part in establishing the Presbyterian Church in the community. He, at one time had been president of the F.U.A. and took an active interest in community affairs. It was away back in March, 1936, that I came home to dinner to find that Hector had been invited to share the mid-day meal.

He said, "Sam", when I shook his hand, "I've stayed with it about as long as I'm able, an' I've asked your father to hold my auction sale."

He undoubtedly suffered with mixed emotions at the moment but managed to maintain a big smile. His words came as a complete surprise and somewhat of a shock, not only to me but to all of us - the community would never be quite the same again.

At the sale he came over to me and said, "Yer father's doing just fine." A touching thing is an auction sale, where everything is knocked down to the highest bidder; where all one's worldly goods go on display before the



Mr. and Mrs. McFadyen and Dr. and Mrs. Jas. Mackay when here for Dixonville church dedication.

public, for them to do with as they will, to buy or not to buy. On those little old farms the horses were left until the last. The creatures that had known each other all their lives were separated without mercy. The calling of one to the other was enough to affect the heart of any animal lover.

McFayden's sale, typical of all other farm sales of that day, was cause for smiles and cause for tears. Like the curtain being drawn after a pleasant scene, is the farewell of the little family farm.

McLEAN, PHYLLIS TEACHERAGE DAYS

submitted by Phyllis J. McLean

It was a bright, late August morning in 1948, when I drove up to the Mersey School, a few miles out of Wanham in the Spirit River School Division. My first reaction was disappointment. The one-room frame building was not made of logs, and for one who had come to be a pioneer, that was a distinct disadvantage! The teacherage, nestled down some twenty yards from the school, offered possibilities. Grey without, and drab within, the first of two rooms contained a kitchen table, chairs, a wood burning stove, two cupboards and a wash stand. In the second room there was a bed and heater. A kerosene lamp and a pail to carry water from the nearest dug-out were also provided.

MICE

I was soon to learn that I was not the sole occupant of my little home. The holes in the walls were doorways for numerous families of mice. Quiet during the day, they industriously scampered and gnawed at night. I lined up all my shoes beside my bed and threw them in the general direction of the noise, until sleep overcame me. More drastic action was necessary. A direct frontal attack one night ended up with the mouse chasing me! Traps helped, but removing the dead mice was an ordeal. Finally, poison cleared the house and silence reigned. New paper

on the walls, paint, and bright curtains transformed the teacherage into a cozy, welcoming home at the end of a day's work.

WOOD SPLITTING

As winter came on, a large part of the coziness depended on keeping the fires burning. That entailed splitting wood. At that job I was no professional, being greatly concerned lest I split my foot instead of the block. What to do? During the winter, several of the fathers would drive to the school to take their children home. While waiting for them to be dismissed, the men would keep warm by splitting wood. I wonder if they ever realized that their arrival in the school yard would always prolong the time for school dismissal by at least fifteen minutes. An expert can split quite a pile of wood in fifteen minutes. If they did realize, I don't think they minded, and the children never seemed concerned if school went on a little longer.

Keeping the fires burning all night required a system. I would stoke the fire well, and leave a supply of wood, coal and snow close to the heater. Awakened sometime during the early hours of morning by icy cold that penetrated through the blankets, I would leap out of bed and pile on more wood and coal, then dive under the covers and wait, until the blazing heat could no longer be endured. Jumping out of bed once more, I would throw snow on top of the blaze. This usually had the effect similar to turning down a thermostat, and kept the fire burning until morning.



Left to Right: Stafka Misunis, Adelaide Zmean and Phyllis McLean.

SMOKE

A stove pipe passed through the wall, joining the kitchen stove and heater to the pipe that went up through the roof. One night I was awakened by the smell of smoke. I could not discover the cause, but decided that the best thing to do was to extinguish the fire in both the stove and the heater. I threw ample amounts of snow on both fires. Almost instantly the teacherage became so full of smoke that it was impossible to remain there. Seizing the storm lantern and my coat I made my way to the school, built a fire in the stove, and huddled in shivering, eye-stinging misery until morning. Next day I discovered that the stovepipe had come apart-just where it passed through the wall into the bedroom and the smoke, in-

stead of going up, came out. The damage was quickly repaired but the smell of smoke lingered on everything for days.

Was I lonely during my year at the Mersey School District? Not often. My nearest neighbors, Lily and Elmer Sather, lived about one-half mile away. I knew I could visit, stay for a meal, or spend the night any time I wished. All homes seemed open to me. Self-discipline was necessary to keep me at my lesson preparation. This friendliness and warm sense of being welcome made the year I spent in Mersey one of the happiest in my life.

The following year I moved to teach the seventh, eighth and ninth grades in Wanham. Another teacher, Stafka Misunis and I rented a two-roomed house in town, and rode up to the school with the students on the bus every morning. I remember returning several days early from the Christmas holidays in order to clean house before classes began. The candies and nuts from the Christmas program had been put into sacks in our house. I knew that a good number had been trampled into the floor. It took two days to thaw the house. Then I set about scrubbing the floor. Water, even boiling water, immediately turned to ice as soon as it hit the floor. For days we skidded around on a thin layer of ice.

GOOD MORNING, MISS McLEAN

That January the thermometer plunged to minus fifty degrees fahrenheit, and stayed there for several days. The school was closed. To keep warm, Stafka and I stayed in bed for half the morning, taking turns at getting up to put more wood on the fire. We became accustomed to sleeping late. The day school reopened, I awoke in time to see the school bus pulling away from the corner. What consternation! To get ready, then walk the mile up to the school would make us very late indeed. An amused and obliging neighbor drove us up in his car. As a teacher, I had never been late for classes before. What would my pupils think, or say? Guiltily, I opened the door and slipped in. With quiet courtesy they stood to their feet and gave the customary greeting, "Good morning, Miss McLean." Gratefully I responded, and the days' classes began.

Do I regret those 'hard' years, living without some of the comforts that are now considered essential for happiness? I do not. I counted friendship then of higher value than physical comforts. I count it so today, and always look forward to visiting old friends. For many, I am sure, life in a teacherage was, (and where teacherages still exist, can be today) a terribly lonely experience. That it was not so for me was due to the kind of people who lived in that part of the Spirit River School District where it was my privilege to teach.



WILLIAM McLEAN AND FAMILY

by Marie McLean

Mr. and Mrs. William McLean were born in Prince Edward Island, and in 1912 came to Edmonton, with a family of 8 children.

When war broke out in 1914, Mr. McLean and 2 sons, Jack and Hugh, enlisted and served overseas. Hugh was killed in action in France in 1918.

When Mr. McLean and son Jack came back from overseas, they took homesteads in Heart Valley. Mr. McLean moved to Heart Valley in 1921, with some of the family. Jack, who was then married to Marie Ronning of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, with two daughters, Olive and Eileen, came to live in Heart Valley for 23 years. Then they moved to Grande Prairie.

Mrs. William McLean had the first post office in Heart Valley, and later opened a store, which she ran for several years until son Alex took it over.

Mr. William McLean passed away in 1940, at Grande Prairie hospital. Mrs. McLean passed away in 1947. When Mrs. McLean was taken very ill in 1938, a plane bringing Dr. Carlisle down from Grande Prairie landed west of the McLean home on the field. All the neighbors around came to see it, as in those days it was something very new in the country. So Mrs. McLean had her first plane ride back to Grande Prairie hospital. The plane was quite large and was then called 'Yukon Southern', and was later bought by C.P.A. Grant McConachie, a son-in-law, who was then manager of the airline and had something to do with bringing the plane in.

Our main place of gathering for meetings, etc., was the community hall built on the banks of Kadot Creek. Many dances were held there and the music was usually furnished by some of the local people. Art Peebles played the guitar, Art Johnson, violin, and Art Tansem, from Wanham, beat the drums, with Marie McLean on the piano. All our summer picnics were held there also. We always had plenty of food and coffee and best of all - ice cream, which was quite a treat in those days. We all had a good time.



*Mr. and Mrs. William
McLean and
granddaughters, Olive
and Eileen McLean.*



Jack and Marie McLean.

PETE McNEE

by Sam Parlee

It was September 9th, 1918, when Pete McNee, a widower with a 14 year old son, chose a quarter of land out of a township set aside for returned men. The next day he went to the land office at Spirit River and filed on S.E. 22-76-3 W6th. In April he filed on the N.W. 15 of the same township.

FIRST MAN TO GROW WHEAT IN HEART VALLEY

The returned men had been advised by the Soldier Settlement Board not to grow wheat but to grow oats, which would be less of a risk with early frosts. Pete was eager to plant some wheat on an experimental basis. His venture proved to be very worthy and others followed the example and found wheat to be well suited to the district.

PURE BRED CLYDESDALES

Pete demonstrated more than average confidence in the new area. He believed that it was important to have good foundation stock and brought in pure bred mares, pure bred cattle and poultry. His efforts were not all crowned with success however. On one occasion he was bringing home a sow from Spirit River in the night with a team and wagon, when he came to real grief. Howard Meadus was to meet him at the Kakut with a lantern. Either Howard came too late or too early. There was no light there. Pete attempted to ford the turbulent stream, but his horses lost their balance and drowned. Pete caught a tree and managed to get to shore. The sow was found the next day, still alive.

Peter Jr. lost his life in a hunting accident at Watino, at the age of 16. He and another lad were out shooting rabbits with their 22's. One went one way around a stack and the other came around toward him, the result being disastrous.

There were times when Pete was not too well in his old age, and Frank and Christina Mitchell would take him in to care for him. When he was well enough he would go back to his bachelor quarters, where he lived with a dog name 'Pupper'.

In 1939 he was watering the horses and fell beneath their feet. Mr. Barber found him in a trampled condition.

Again the Mitchells came to his rescue. Morris Burns looked after his place and Pete was taken to Edmonton. He never really recovered from that ordeal, and died with cancer in the Veteran's hospital in 1940. He left his farm to Christina Mitchell and her brother, Jock Webster.

PETER McNEE

by Olive Webber

Some of the early settlers in the Heart Valley district were ex-British soldiers of the first World War, and all were memorable characters in their own unique ways.

Peter McNee came from Glasgow, Scotland, where he had been a butcher. He brought with him his young son Peter. They built a small shack on the half section the elder McNee filed on. There were no roads in the country, just trails, and the only way to get across the Kadot River was by fording it. At times this proved to be very dangerous. Peter McNee tried to cross one day in early spring, when the water was very high. His wagon and horses were swept downstream. It was with difficulty that he made it to shore, but his team of horses were drowned.

Peter Jr., tragically killed in a hunting accident, was buried in the Heart Valley cemetery on his father's land.

Mr. McNee stayed on the farm alone, until ill health forced him to go to the Veterans Hospital in Edmonton, where he passed away.

OZAN PREVOST (MCSWEENEY)

I was born in 1921 on the Prevost farm, five miles south-east of Wanham in the large farm house my father never quite completed. My mother tells me that Leo, (my eleven year old brother, then) heard my first cries and thought there was a little runt pig in the house.

I managed to survive the cold weather in the winters, and the mosquito infested summers, together with my seven brothers and sisters until I was six and we moved into what was then a very modern house in town. My father started up the Massey-Harris agency, but died a few years later (1930).

The good Sisters of Providence of St. Augustines' convent in Peace River helped my mother by buying many articles she had left from the farm. My father had a habit of buying at all auction sales, so we were well supplied with articles from pipe, tools, ropes, lumber, hoses, clocks, etc., etc. These articles kept the three of us, Cecile, Gay and me in the convent for quite a few years.

Those were the years of easy acceleration and I found myself thirteen years old and in grade nine. This was not to my advantage, because at this time I had to write departmental exams. Ten of us were going to High School in the Wanham Lumber yard, and boys also came into my life - consequently I failed grade ten. Mother then sent me off to St. Josephs Academy in Grande Prairie to finish grades ten, eleven and twelve.

At the age of seventeen, I faced the big city of Edmonton to go to normal school. City life was new to me, Edmonton being rather larger than Wanham, and I was very frightened and lost at first. If I'd had the eight



The Prevost home built by Ed Prevost.

dollars and fifty cents, I would have taken the first train home.

I spent the term with the Sisters of Service on 105th street, and soon became accustomed to life and studies in the city. I thoroughly enjoyed Normal School - resulting in a temporary teacher's certificate in June, 1940.

My first school was a little country school in Buffalo Lakes, with fourteen pupils. I have many wonderful

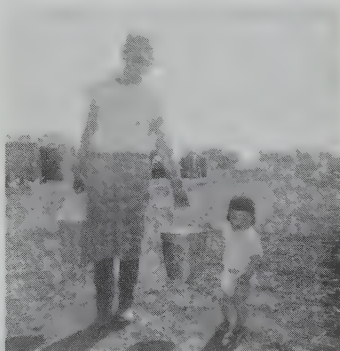


McSweeney Wedding - September 8, 1947. Good old Peace River "gumbo" on Wanham street. Note the sidewalk.

memories of my first year. My one grade nine student is now Dr. Kacey Shiluk. Last fall I attended the wedding of one of my first grade eight students - Leona Gould, in Vancouver (her second wedding). I wasn't much older than many of my students, so spent all recesses, noon hours and week-ends with them, playing ball or skiing on Boetchers Hill.



Dennis McSweeney, Bert Elhorn and Jackie McSweeney.



Mac and Pat doing the chores.

From Buffalo Lakes, I moved to Eaglesham to be closer to home, but Mother was never too happy with my term there, because to be a good teacher there one had to party, and learn to consume home-made beer. Everyone had a crock behind their kitchen stove.

It was while there, that I ran for 'Queen' for some war effort. I came in third. I believe the money was spent on a Bren Gun Carrier. The next number of years were spent in Wanham, teaching grades one, two, and three, then grade one. I also taught catechism.

In 1945, Mr. Lassiter started his big land clearing project in Wanham, and Jim McSweeney appeared on the scene.

We were married on September 8, 1947 by Father Paquin, in the little St. Patricks Church. It had rained all day the day before, so the Wanham street was a mess of mud. Because the reception was held across the street in the Wanham Hotel, we had to put planks across the street to get from our house to the hotel.

One year later, Jim and I started a new life on the farm, ten miles east of Wanham, where we raised three children, Dennis, Jaqueline and Patrick. We were there for fifteen years.

Although we went through many hardships on the farm, looking back, I realize they were our happiest days, with the most sincere friends and neighbors, and a place where the children learned responsibilities, with a few chores, and animals to tend.

In 1966, however, we realized that we would never advance financially on the farm, so we sold to Otto Rheil and left for Chilliwack, B.C., where I had no difficulty resuming my teaching career. Pat was now in grade one, Jaqueline in grade eight and Dennis in grade twelve. Mac was less fortunate finding work here, so he usually returned up north to work on 'big' equipment for 'big' wages.

B.C. is a beautiful province, and it took me some time to get used to seeing so much fruit go to waste. We now have a tree of every kind of fruit grown in B.C., and I still have my vegetable garden.

We first moved to a three acre lot and the children had their horses, but these were later sold, and we moved to a smaller lot in town where Pat could go to his own hockey practices, etc.

Dennis and Jacqueline are both married now and we have a sweet little grandson Seth. Mac is retired - I'm still teaching. We spend holidays in Reno, Hawaii, or Mexico, and Mac spends a lot of time fishing on the Fraser.



The Prevost Gazebo - with nurse, Miss Prevost, Ozan, Cecile and Gay.

MCVITTIE

by Dora McVittie

Although Louis is from Rimbey, Alberta, and Dora is from a little town north east of Edmonton by the name of Warspite, we met and married in Edmonton. That was on October 17, 1947, and about two weeks later we landed in Wanham. That wasn't my first sight of the Peace country, as Louis had been out here for a few years prior to that, working for a lumber company south of Grande Prairie. When Lassiter started opening land around Wanham, Louis was a catskiner with the company for some years. I had come up by car with him in the spring of 1947, so got introduced to the country. I flew back by plane, which was quite a thing at that time. I remember it was December and farmers were still combining flax. This was an unusual sight for me, as I had never seen flax grown before and never a harvest so late.

We came to Wanham with our car and two-wheeled trailer with all our furniture and personal belongings. Louis worked for Lassiters and I had a job for a few months in the Wanham Hotel. We bought Albert Olsens farm and moved on to it in the spring of 1948. From then on, for a few years, we stayed on the farm. Louis worked on a cat for Clifford Tansem for quite a few years, in summer. In winter we would go to a lumber camp south of Grande Prairie.

Loran, our son was born in Spirit River on December 10, 1950, and when he had to start school we moved to town, into a house just up the hill so he wouldn't have far to go. He got all his schooling in Wanham and graduated there. He was very much involved with the Air Cadets, and had many awards and trips to Eastern Canada and the States. The cadets had some very interesting and educational tours. He took his first year of college at Grande Prairie and four more at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He got his bachelor of Science and then his degree in pharmacy. During the summer months he worked in the Grande Prairie Hospital as orderly and in the laboratory. He met a nursing-aide from Lethbridge, who was working at the hospital at that time, and they were married on July 7, 1973. Judy Whittle became Mrs. Loran McVittie. He worked as a resident Pharmacist at Peace River Hospital. They moved to Ottawa, Ontario, four years ago. Loran went there for more study, and Judy attended college and got her R.N. Now Loran is working as a resident pharmacist in the Children's Hospital, and Judy is nursing in the same hospital, in Ottawa. They have no children.

Time seemed to have gone fast for us while in Wanham. Louis worked away from home quite a lot on oil outfits, and I got involved in community clubs and with the library, which I enjoyed very much for ten years. Time slipped by. We decided to do something else, as my health was giving out. We moved to Grande Prairie in June of 1969, and Louis has been working as shipper-receiver at Simpson Sears for over ten years now. I have been working at a Day Care, cooking for over 50 children and staff.

We have had a busy time so far here. We are very much involved with our church. I went to college night school and took a typing course a few years ago (you would

never know it by my mistakes). We have many friends here, besides so many who have moved here from Wanham, that Grande Prairie has never been lonely for us.

We had many experiences, good and bad, while we were in Wanham. One that I didn't like was the trip to and from Edmonton, as the roads were poor. My worst enemy was the ferries. They were on the three crossings when we arrived. Sometimes you didn't know when you would get over the river, as the water would be too high or too much ice on the bottom of the ferry. One late fall Mr. and Mrs. Frank Greenfield were coming home from Edmonton with us. The ferry wasn't going, as it had too much ice, so we sat there along with a long line of other travellers, hoping to get going across that night. It was getting late and we were told that the ferry wasn't going across that night, so we had to make a mad dash to Valleyview for the night. Luckily the new hotel had just opened. We had to be up early next morning to be at least near the front of the line, and we did finally get across that evening.

The people were very helpful and kind in Wanham, especially when we had the big fire in 1950. When I was sick there were many people we owe thanks to - especially Mrs. Harrington, who was always there as soon as you needed her, no matter what she was doing or what kind of weather.

CAT'S OUT

When we moved to our farm it was quite isolated and people didn't lock doors. Louis worked at Lassiters at this time, and he would leave early in the morning and as I didn't have much to do I would throw the cat out and crawl back in bed. This morning I heard the cat scratch so I quickly jumped out of bed in my birthday-suit to let the cat in. When I opened the door, there stood a neighbor big as day. You never saw the door close so quickly! I don't even know if the cat came in.

WILLIAM (SCOTTY) MCWHIRTER

by Olive Webber

William McWhirter (Scotty, as he was known to everyone) came from Scotland and 'batched' with Frank Mitchell the first year. He filed on the half section the Heart Valley School was built on, donating three acres for that purpose.

He was the first person in the district to own a radio and also a car. Many a cold winter night neighbors would gather at his place to enjoy the radio programs.

QUICK START

One of his neighbors called on him one cold day to find Scotty warming up a pail of gasoline on the cookstove. 'The car starts quicker if the gas is warmed up,' he said with a chuckle.

He used to say he hated digging potatoes, so in the spring he'd plant them in an old straw pile. Come fall, he'd burn the pile and there would be all his potatoes in one pile, ready to put away in the cellar for winter.

He owned one of the two threshing machines in the district and threshed for the men on his crew. He was a most generous person and a friend to all.

His squared-log, two storey house still stands where it was built in the late thirties. Scotty passed away in 1947 and is buried in the Heart Valley cemetery.

HOWARD H. MEADUS

by H.H. Meadus

My first visit to Canada was in 1907, when I went to Osage and worked for a farmer there for some time. Later I went to Winnipeg, where I studied for awhile. When war was declared, I joined the Fort Garry Horse Cavalry Regiment. When we went overseas to England, I renewed friendship with a girl I had known and loved for many years. We were married on August 26, 1916.

After the war my wife and I - with our little daughter, then one year old - left England and returned to Canada. We arrived at Belloy (then known as Grizzly Bear) in 1919. I took up land north of Kakut Creek, because no land was open for filing at that time.

Our first home was in a tent, until I could cut logs for a log cabin - which is standing today. Plowing that spring I did with a walking plow and two horses.

After finally getting settled, I carried on with the usual farm work. My wife made the little cabin cosy and we were very comfortable.



Howard and Madge Meadus, Christmas 1977. Both are 90 years "young".

HORSE LANGUAGE

Our little girl - to whom we had given the pet name of Paddy - was a happy little soul. As she grew older, she found great pleasure in building herself a playroom

amongst trees and bushes close to the cabin. We were very much amused one day when she came running to tell us that she could hear a neighbour, (who was working in a field a short distance away) talking to his horses. When my wife asked her what he was saying she replied, "You wouldn't understand, Mummie, because he was talking horse language."

Pioneering meant hard work, and my wife being used to city life, did not at first find things very easy. But it did not take her very long to learn how to make butter and bake bread, etc., with the help of kind friends and neighbours. Some are still very dear friends. Her first batch of bread was made in the tent and was not a success - the loaves turned out to be bricks! Altho' work was hard, we had our pleasures as well - dances, picnics, school concerts, etc. As Paddy grew older she became a great help to us and eagerly shared all the fun and pleasures. We wanted her to have as much at home as she could, so I moved a granary inside the fence surrounding the cabin to enable her to invite her young friends for dancing, with music played by a gramophone. Some of the pretty old tunes we used to enjoy so much. They seemed to have a happy time.

For summer fun we made a tennis court - or shall I say an apology for one - (the ground not being too level) that also provided fun.

As the years passed I began to suffer with arthritis, which gradually became worse. I was unable to stand the severe winters, which meant that I would have to give up the farm. We sold out during October of 1949. It was rather a sad time, after living in Heart Valley for nearly thirty years. I started with a walking plow and two horses, ending with a steel-beam brush breaker and 6 horses. We left for B.C., to be nearer Paddy and her family.

We are now living in White Rock, where we have been for about twenty-three years.

WALKING THE LOG

There is one episode of the early farm days that will ever be in my memory and that happened when Paddy was about three years old. When returning from a visit to the Starratts we had to cross the Kakut Creek. At this time it was in flood, plenty of water rushing along. Two trees had been felled and put across from bank to bank. One tree was a little higher than the other so that one could walk and hold on to the other. My wife had Paddy under one arm, holding on to the other tree. On reaching about 3-4 feet from the opposite bank, my wife saw the trees were almost crossed. She was horrified. Not daring to look down at the rushing water, she put Paddy astride the tree and then climbed up behind her. Telling the tot what to do, they managed inch by inch to reach the bank just as I appeared. I was too astonished to say anything because I was on my way to take them across. My wife said it was well worth the effort she made to see the expression on my face! How she had the courage to cross, I do not know; neither did she.

I think it is time I ended my story. Now we are old and grey, but memory is still keen!

Hanging on our sitting-room wall is a beautiful souvenir - a small bunch of wild flowers, dried and pressed on a white background and framed in a narrow black frame. The flowers grew around our log cabin and were gathered by one of our granddaughters in the summer of 1972. This is signed, 'Flowers from the Old Homestead' in Heart Valley! We will treasure it always.

MR. AND MRS. HOWARD MEADUS

by Mrs. Ann Wallace

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Meadus came to the Peace River District in the year 1920, where Howard worked in a mill in Belloy for a little over a year. He then moved to his homestead, ten miles south of Wanham in the district known as Heart Valley. His government grant of land was nothing but bush. He and his wife Madge, (who came with him from England after World War I) and their baby daughter Ann (generally known by the nickname of 'Paddy'), set out to build themselves a log house. They cut and hewed their own logs and gradually got their house built, living in a tent while doing this. They spent one very cold winter in that tent, waking some mornings with the blankets frozen to their mouths. Their stove soon warmed it in the morning.

Madge quickly learned to cut wood for that stove and for many years to come.

They had to clear their own land by hand so they could grow grain, and as the years went on they had several large fields and a large garden. In those first years before there was a road, everything was transported by pack horse and everywhere they went was on horseback. Howard took his small daughter on his horse and, as Madge often recalls, she carried an oil can on her horse, as they always seemed to need oil. Once, when they were coming home after dark from visiting friends, Howard was ahead when they reached a fork in the paths. Howard's horse went one way and Madge's stopped dead. She called to him and he came back. He then let her take the lead and her horse went by the other path and took them home.

BROKEN LEG

Another time when their friends Bob and Iris Starratt were falling trees, their eldest son Bud, (about six years old) got in the way and got his leg broken. Howard, Bob, and several other men made a stretcher and they walked 12 to 15 miles, carrying Bud on the stretcher, to the railroad station in Wanham.

Several times their farm was surrounded by bush or grass fires, which threatened to destroy everything.

They hauled their household water from a spring at the bottom of the 'Kadot' ravine. This Howard did with a team of horses and large barrel on a stoneboat. For extra soft water, they caught rain water or melted snow. Normally, they kept five milking cows, and Madge made butter, which she sold or traded to the local store for

groceries. Eggs were also used the same way, to help out their meager finances. They had a very hard life but a good living, good friends, and quite a number of good times.

They sold the farm in 1949 and went to B.C., to be near their daughter, and made their living chicken-farming, until they retired.

They are now in poor health at age of 91, and live in the extended care Unit of Surrey Memorial Hospital.

They get the best of care and can spend a great deal of their time sitting side by side in their wheelchairs. They are near their daughter and her husband, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren with another to arrive in October.



Mrs. Beamer with a room full of her paintings.



The Brent Larson Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Shawn, Wilma, Brent. Front Row: Ryan and Troy.



Eddie Fortier

FROM THE WIND SWEEPED PLAINS OF SASKATCHEWAN TO THE WHISPERING PINES OF ALBERTA

submitted by Orist Melnyk

The first memories I can recall are from 1928 when we were living on the farm seven miles north east of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Our family consisted of my grandfather Elko Melnyk, my father Axenty, Nancy my mother and my sister Sally. My brother Steve was born in 1929.

The thought of my sister going to school did not have an effect on me until she wouldn't go by herself. After about a week of school it seems that I remember her bawling before she left for school and when she returned, she said the crows were attacking and were going to eat her up. These crows nested in the trees that grew on each side of the highway going to school. To really understand how many crows there were a person would have to have seen them. When they took to the air it looked like a cloud from the horizon to horizon. As soon as an intruder would walk by, the pesky things would dive down at you by the hundreds. Since Sally refused to walk by these crows by herself I had to go to school with her. Even though I was four and a half years old, I managed the two mile walk to school. Although the main highway between Rosthern and Prince Albert went past our gate, there was not much traffic and the sight of a car was a rare occasion. However, I found out that on these rare occasions, our teacher had to drive his Model T Ford past our place to get to school. I decided it was time for some strategy. I would walk just far enough from home so my parents couldn't see or hear us. I would then lie down in the middle of the road and wait for the teacher to come along. The entire time Sally would be pleading and crying for me to get up from the road. The teacher had a choice of stopping or driving over me. It worked to the extent that the teacher always stopped, but I got my seat tanned at home on more than one occasion, when my sister would tell on me. This was the period the old timers speak of as the "Dirty Thirties."

Farming was not at its best in our part of Saskatchewan. I can remember times when the wind would start

up at noon and by two o'clock in the afternoon it would be dark. The wind would raise the sand until it obliterated the sun completely. When the wind storm was over there would be sand on the inside of the window sills. The crops that were three to five inches tall, were swept out by the root. In some places they were covered up by a couple of feet of sand. I remember walking where the fences used to stand tall but after the storm only the tops of the posts were visible. The farmers had to pull the fences out of the sand and rebuild them again. It really didn't seem to matter about the crops, because if the sand storms didn't ruin them grasshoppers, gophers, Russian thistle, milk weed and quack grass did. One day my dad decided that he had had enough. We had heard about all the beautiful farm land in Northern Alberta. It didn't cost you much, only a few dollars. Besides that, there was plenty of water, not dried out as at Rosthern.

MOTHER WEPT THAT NIGHT

In 1928 Dad got on the freight train and went to see for himself. My mother stayed home with grandfather and us kids. Dad was gone about two months, coming home in time to harvest what little crop there was. I remember every word of Dad's expedition into the north as he described it to us. About the same time the next year he was gone again. When he returned he said he had a homestead and we would be moving to Alberta after he had a house built. Mother cried when he described the location and the hardships we would face. There would be no roads, schools, churches, doctors, hospitals or cultivated land. She did not want to move to such a place and surely there must be better places. After a lot of talking and convincing Mom agreed. These inconveniences would just be for a year or so, Dad stated, then we would have schools, doctors, and roads.



Construction of Melnyk's house in 1929. On Scaffold: Axenty Melnyk, Harry Bihun. Left to Right: Kost Bidulka, Mary Bihun, Mrs. Bihun, Josie and Tony Bilinski, Mrs. Bilinski and Joe Bilinski.

LIKE NOAH'S ARK

Anyway the soil was good with a lot of good hay for livestock and timber for lumber and wood. The good points outweighed the bad and we prepared for the big move.



Orist and Sally Melnyk on the farm at Rosthern - 1929.

Our actual move did not start until the fall of 1931, after Dad had returned from taking his Fordson tractor, a sixteen inch breaking plow and two bottom tractor stubble plow by train to our new homestead. This tractor was in very good condition as he had bought it new in 1924. He could not take his twenty-two inch Humming Bird threshing machine as there was not enough room on the flat car and he could not afford two flat cars so it was left behind. That was a very busy time around our place as everything had to be packed and a box car ordered. Finally the big day came. Everything was loaded into one car: machinery, household furniture, horses, cows and chickens, just like Noah's Ark. There wasn't enough money for train fare so we were told we would have to ride in the box car too. It was illegal, but who would know if we got on under cover of darkness. After all the goodbyes from friends and relatives, kisses, tears and prophecies that we would probably never see each other again, we left.

In my young mind I envisioned that I was going to the opposite end of the world. Around midnight we were



Mr. Melnyk's 1926 Fordson tractor and two bottom plow brought from Saskatchewan - taken in 1942.

loaded into the box car, along with feather quilts, food hampers and all. We kids were warned not to cry or talk so we would not be discovered by the police. We were told that if we were caught we would have to go to jail. That word alone was fear at its worst. I was so scared that I was almost sick! We stayed in that box car about eleven hours before it was hooked onto the freight train ... the train that would take us to that great province of Alberta. It was with a sigh of relief that we left. We were moving! We were not discovered, so even in the cramped dark box car we were actually happy.

WE FELT LIKE CORNERED RATS

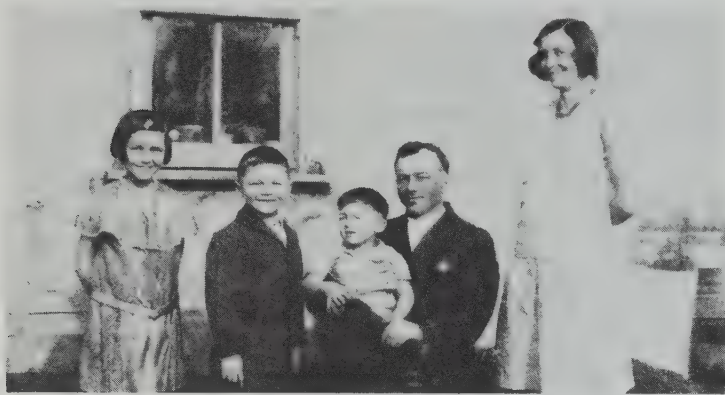
Our joy of finally being on our way, to our new home, was to come to an abrupt end as the freight train arrived in Saskatoon. A number of box cars containing the belongings of more families moving to other parts of Alberta, along with ours, were switched off to a siding and held. After about six hours my dad found out what the problem was. Evidently there were some goods stolen at Rosthern and all box cars were to be searched; in-

cluding ours. It turned out that we were to remain there for forty eight hours. During this time, the R.C.M.P. opened our car; entered with big flashlights and shone them all over and right into our eyes. We felt like cornered rats, and twice as scared, but I must say they were darn decent fellows. They counted us, spoke with Dad for about fifteen minutes and left; evidently not putting into their report that we were aboard. We waited for two days before being hooked on with the other cars to the next train that came along. Once more we were on our way to Alberta.

This train ride, which started as an exciting adventure, turned out to be a nightmare. It took us six days to get to Dunvegan stock yards outside of Edmonton. The train again stopped as the animals had to be watered. We had travelled a distance of approximately three hundred thirty five miles and were half way there. A few minutes after the train stopped at Dunvegan yards we kids learned that our ride in the box car was to come to an end. My mother refused to ride another mile, or even spend another minute, in that horrible box car. She said she would even walk the rest of the way to Rahab which was the nearest railway station to our homestead. (Rahab was later renamed Codesa.) It turned out that mother, my sister Sally, myself and my younger brother, Steve, not yet two years old, had to walk to the railroad station at Edmonton. Dad had to remain with our possessions in the box car. Away we went walking down the railway track. A bachelor friend of Dad's, Steve Hourishok, who had travelled along with the family to see the Peace River Country was delegated to help Mom with my brother Steve; he had to be carried all the way. If I'm remembering right, it was a distance of nine miles, although it seemed like many more as it was at night. We had no flashlight to guide us while walking those railway ties. I don't know how we made it, but I do remember how tired I was. My mother and dad's friend had their hands full with Steve. He screamed blue murder all the way. He didn't want to be carried and kept pushing away from whoever held him. When we finally arrived at the station it was almost morning. We spent the next two days at the railroad station. It seemed such a huge place to me. My mother did not have much money so we slept in chairs. I don't remember what we did for food or where we ate. Finally we boarded the passenger train going north. At that time there was only one train a week going north. It took us two days to get to our destination. The train had to wait endless hours around Slave Lake as the track had washed out and the grade had slid in. Even though the train ride was really something out of this world to me, I was glad to get off it when we did arrive at Rahab. I remember Mom hurrying us off the train saying, "Oh thank goodness we are here!"

Dad was there to meet us. When the train pulled out and Mom looked around and saw nothing but solid timber sixty feet high, water, mosquitoes and a couple of sod covered shacks her first words to Dad were, "Oh my God! What sort of a hell hole did you bring me and the children to." I later found out one of the sod shacks was a store. To this day I could never find words to describe the horrible jungle that surrounded us as we stood on that platform. Dad loaded our belongings on to the wagon

and we kids got on too. For the life of me I couldn't figure out how we were going to get out of there, as I could see no road. The road turned out to be a rabbit trail, winding like a snake around the big trees and into sloughs so deep the horses practically had to swim. I was sure we were all going to drown before we got home. Dad had tied the wagon box down so it could not float away and even though the wagon wheels were high there was still about three inches of water in the box. The water would run out as soon as you got out of the water hole in the road. It took us about two and one half hours to get to our homestead, the place that we were to call home. Dad's land was NW1/4 Section 32, T78 R1 W6 north west of Rahab. The distance from Codesa to the homestead is five miles but at that time we had to go at least seven miles to get there. That was the only trail leading from our homestead to Rahab and the railway was the only way out of Rahab. The saying, "Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home", was never more true. Even though it was just a two room log house it was heaven to be in after our two week ordeal. Our own home had a stove, table, chairs and beds that we could call our own. The ordeal of moving a distance of seven hundred miles was soon forgotten after a good night's sleep.



Sally, Orist, Steve, Mr. Melnyk and wife Nancy.

The next day it was just like a party all day long. There weren't many people around, but those that were came to welcome us and help in any way possible. There were only two other women in our immediate area. They were Mrs. Joe Bilinsky, now living in Wanham, and Mrs. Harry Bihun, now living at Grande Prairie. Bilinskys lived in a little sod covered hut and had three children then: John, Tony and Josie. Mr. Bilinsky was a carpenter. Annie and Harry Bihun had one daughter Mary, who is now Mrs. Baduik and lives at Sexsmith.

THE CAVE MAN

Jack Spital was one of the few bachelors in our area and he lived in a creek bank. His home was dug in the bank with a front wall with a door. He probably stole the idea from the cave man. Even though small, it was warm and this was his "home sweet home." John Noga, was another bachelor. He had a homestead nearby and had built a small house the same time as Harry and Annie

Bihun had built their home. Annie was John Noga's sister. Joe Bilinsky, Harry Bihun and John Noga, nineteen years of age at that time, had come to the Peace River Country from Manitoba in 1928. They had come with a Model T Ford car and when they got here they sold the car because they were broke; besides there were no roads so they didn't need the car. I remember them relating their experiences in coming north with that Model T. The hills were so steep that they had to back up the hill for fear of the car flipping over backwards. There was also Tony Kropelnicki, who lived one mile to the west of us. He had immigrated from Poland and his family was still in Poland. John Mazurkevich and his wife homesteaded on the next quarter of land west of us. They had one boy by the name of Peter at that time. Mike Keivet's homestead was a mile and a half east of our place. He was from Holland and was another bachelor. Kost Bidulka with his son Bill, daughter Annie, now Mrs. Socha from Eaglesham, came here in 1930, the same time as my dad came. Kost's wife, Pauline Bidulka was my dad's older sister. Their homestead was exactly four and one half miles north of Rahab.

AND BURNT THE NEW HOUSE DOWN

They started building a good sized log house. When it was almost completed they decided to clean up all the wood chips and put them on a pile to burn. That night a breeze came up and a spark must have dropped on some dry grass and burnt the new house down. They lived with Tony Kropelnicki for a year until they rebuilt the house. In those days the logs were hand hewn with a broad axe and the corners were dove tailed or interlocked. This was the reason for all the chips which lead to the fire at Bidulkas.

Getting logs for houses was easy. There was timber every place you looked, but there were no horses around for skidding the logs out. Later in 1929, Harry Bihun brought in a team and everyone around the community would hire him to get their logs skidded out for their buildings. No one had money to pay for this work so they would work it off by clearing land with an axe and grub hoe.

VIXEN CREEK THE TREES WERE SO TALL YOU COULDN'T SEE THE SUN

In the fall of 1931, when we left Saskatchewan, Dad brought along; three horses, pigs, chickens, cows, a binder, hay mower, rake, disk, plow and a grain grinder. The grinder was used to grind feed for animals. Dad chose the site of our house close to a ravine, which we found out later was called Vixen Creek. The trees were so tall and so close together you could hardly see the sun. The trees were mostly white poplar. Our barn was about three hundred feet from the house but you couldn't see it for trees. I was afraid to go to the barn by myself for a long time. Dad had told us that when he started to cut the logs for the house he was looking for trees close by. On one occasion after he picked his tree and took a good

swing with his axe, he heard a big splash nearby. It seems he spooked a mother bear with cubs. The mother put the cubs up a tree and then hid. The tree that Dad was chopping down happened to have a cub in it and it had decided to jump down into the water nearby. Dad, not having a gun did not stick around to see what was going to happen next. After that he made a lot of noise going through the bush so he wouldn't get anymore surprises.

The logs for the house, were hewn on two sides so the walls were more or less straight. Once the walls were up willows were cut and nailed on at angles to the walls and then plastered with mud. The willows would hold the mud on and kept it from falling off. In those days building was a community effort and everyone pitched in when there was a major job to be done. They held a bee for everything and got it done in one day. For example, bee's were held for putting a roof on a house or for plastering the walls. I would enjoy watching everyone play in the mud at plastering time. After I got older they would have jobs for me as well and then it wasn't fun anymore. The only consolation was that there was always a special feast and party held afterwards. The only store bought food was salt, sugar, tea, yeast and sometimes coffee. After a good day's work a meal consisting of perogys, cabbage rolls, and roast chicken was enjoyed. This meal was always accompanied with a gallon of white lightening (known as moosemilk to some) but it was moonshine no matter what you called it. It took your breath away after you swallowed it. No one used mix though, they just drank it straight.



Charlie Brochu's Store - the first store in Codesa (Rahab). Joe Prim Gerard and dogsled - 1930.

In those days people had a different outlook on life. If you had a warm house, some chickens, hogs and livestock, you had everything that was necessary, except maybe flour, which was costly. Actually it was a bargain, but if you had no land broken you had no grain to sell so you had no money. There always seemed to be enough to eat even if you ate meat, potatoes and cabbage one day and the next you had cabbage, potatoes, and meat for a change of diet. In those days there was a flour mill at Sexsmith and later on one at Rycroft. However, I remember people bringing wheat to our place and my dad grinding it into flour with the same grinder that he used to make chop for the livestock. He would tighten the chopper plates so tight that when the flour came out it was so hot it was close to smoking. It was a slow process,

but after it was screened, it wasn't all that bad. The bachelors around here said that it made the best bannock. I used to sneak down to Jack Spital's cave for bannock and jam.

Jack was a veteran of the First World War and was getting some sort of pension. He always had store bought jam and peanut butter which was a real treat for us.

In 1932, Dad started to clear land so we could have a garden and feed for the chickens. We worked hard all summer and broke four acres of land. We also had quite a few stacks of hay that was cut in the sloughs. Dad did some breaking for the neighbors too, although I do not know where he got the money for the gas he used. A forty-five gallon barrel of gas was worth about six dollars. It came to Rahab in a barrel by train. In about 1934, there was a trail cut to Belloy, eight miles southwest of our farm. Dad used to go to Belloy with a wagon and buy gas from Ross Archibald. Ross had a truck and would bring it from Wanham. I used to go along with Dad when he went to Rahab for gas and we would stop at Charlie Brochu's store and post-office. In this store there was a board put up against the wall to make a shelf. The extent of the stock was what would fit on this one shelf. I went with Dad quite often because there was no school at all for any of the children.

I used to get into all kinds of mischief when I was a young boy and I could never sit still for long. My brother, Steve was still quite small and when he would come out to play, it was my job to look after him. It wasn't always easy as toys were something we never had. I always made out okay as I had a great imagination. I could take a square block of wood and it would become my imaginary truck or a tractor and sometimes it would even be my airplane. One time I got hold of a wash tub and a piece of rope and put Steve in the tub. I pulled the tub over to the corral and got my pet calf out of the corral. I tied one end of the rope to the wash tub handle and the other end around the calf's neck. I instructed Steve to hang on tight and he would get a good ride. The calf would not move so I took my jacket off and proceeded to scare the calf into moving. When the calf moved, the tub had to move also which scared the calf more than my waving the jacket did! When the calf started to run, the tub with Steve in it came a-rumblin' behind. As they picked up speed, I got left behind. The calf really was frightened because the tub was air borne half of the time, and he kept running faster and faster. At one point Steve flew out of the tub but the calf kept running for it's life and belling like mad. During all this commotion, the cattle broke out of the corral to go to the calf's aid, and Mom and Dad came tearing out of the house to see what was going on. The cattle and the calf - with the tub still tied behind, were running around like crazy while Steve was screaming his fool head off. It didn't take me long to make myself scarce. I didn't show up again until it was dark. I hoped that Dad had forgotten the whole mess. He hadn't forgotten, and you can be sure I never tried that again!

The year 1932, saw a few more people come to our community. John Noga brought his mother and father; his sisters - Elsie and Rose, and his brother, Peter. Mrs. Bidulka arrived with sons Joe, and Isador, and daughter, Alice. Isador is presently living at Eaglesham. Bidulkas'

brought quite a bit of horse equipment with them. They had six horses, which was quite a lot in those days. They broke a lot of acres with four horses ahead of a breaking plow.

In the first couple of years on the homestead my dad went out every fall pitching bundles to make a few extra dollars. Wages were very low and unemployment high. He always managed to find a job, and in about five weeks time he would be back home again. He never had to go further than Rycroft for a job, but then Rycroft was far



Mr. Nick Noga and his wife Barbara - 1932.

enough away. He worked one fall for Mr. Moderige, and one fall for Mr. Markovich. Dad was very handy with equipment. Especially with a threshing machine, as he had his own when he farmed at Rosthern. The banks would not let anyone borrow a nickle in those days. My wife, Marie, and I often talk about hardships in our time, but Dad must have had more than his share. It took guts to move out into a wilderness, leaving a whole section of cleared land behind. He never got a nickle for it. He just



The Bidulka Family going cranberry picking - Isadore at the helm. Their first home on the homestead.

abandoned it and pretended he never owned it. Yes, it took guts and determination, and that's what the pioneers had who came to this area.

I remember when Dad would say he was going hunting. In our area, hunting season must have been twelve months long, although there had to be a legal season also. The game was plentiful, but the settlers only hunted when they were short of meat. If it was in the summer, they would divide the meat among the neighbors as there was no power or freezers. We didn't even have an ice-house

then, but we canned meat in quart jars and it kept very well.

Dad usually did most of his hunting in the winter time. In those days, the trees and brush were so thick that the sun and wind never got through to dry the ground. The resulting wet conditions were ideal for the growth of slough grass ... fireweed and young willows. This underbrush would accumulate to a depth of a foot and a half. With two feet of snow on top, no one could walk any distance without the aid of snowshoes or skis.

Dad would make himself a pair of skis out of spruce boards. After cooking one end of the boards in water for about six hours, he was able to bend the ends up and tie them with wire until they dried out. He would take a piece of old harness strap and nail it on to the ski and that was what you put your feet into. Next he would sand and wax them several times, and he was ready to go hunting.

HUNTING IN RAHAB WOODS

On one of Dad's hunting expeditions he shot a moose about a mile from home. He got one of his bachelor neighbors, Steve Hourishok, to help him skid the moose home. They took the biggest horse we had because of the deep snow. This horse was young and high spirited. Most horses go "hay-wire" when they smell a moose, and this one was no exception. Steve and Dad had a difficult time to get the horse close enough to hook on to the moose. They had to blindfold the horse and back him up for about three hundred feet before they could hook the chain on the moose. They had a long rope tied to the horse that they were going to use to keep him under control. However, things did not workout as they planned. When they took the blindfold off, the horse saw the moose and went stark, raving mad! As my dad described it, the horse took off at full gallop with the



Mr. and Mrs. Nick Bogdanek - 1949.

moose dragging behind, As the moose went by, Dad and Steve jumped onto it. They managed to hold on to the rope until the moose slid over the first windfall. Steve Hourishok was hurled into the air, and when he landed he was between the moose and the horse. No harm was done when the moose slid over him as he went out of sight in the deep snow. Dad was still riding the moose and hanging on to the rope in an effort to slow the horse down, and get him under control. He managed to stay on

until the horse went around a tree. The moose carcass hit the tree shooting around one side while Dad flew into the snow on the other side. They never saw the horse and moose again until about two hours later when they staggered into the yard. The horse had come home at a full gallop with the moose behind and had ran right into the barn. We had seen him coming, and although he was a bay horse originally, he looked white - all covered with lather. When Dad and Steve entered the barn, the horse was shaking. They couldn't move that horse out of the barn for love nor money. Finally they pulled the moose away with another horse. It took about a week for the horse to return to normal.

After watching Dad make skis, I used to make myself a pair every year when the first snow came. I would always try to improve over the previous ones. They came in handy on my trap line. I was eight years old when I had my own trap line of thirteen traps. I was too young to carry a gun so I used to carry a hatchet for protection. Since there was such heavy bush all over, there were animals of every description. There were bears, bobcats (lynx), wolves and coyotes. They mostly avoided humans whenever possible and would attack only when surprised, cornered or wounded. There were a few close calls, but outside of a good scare, no harm was done.

One of these close calls was shortly after Mr. and Mrs. Nick Bogdanek came to their homestead north of Rahab. They had two sons at that time, Bill and John. Mr. Bogdanek had built his house among heavy spruce trees. In fact, his entire quarter of land had heavy trees on it and there were big trees scattered throughout the yard, too. I recall their mother relating this episode to my mother. Bill and John were playing in the yard when a bear wandered in. It had probably been watching the boys and decided to investigate further. When the bear came towards the boys, they climbed on to a wagon box, not knowing what a bear was. As the bear walked around and around the wagon, the boys were running around inside, following it's every move. The bear kept at this for awhile and finally the boys jumped off one side of the wagon while the bear was on the other side. They scampered into the house yelling, "Mother, come and see the big puppy that came to play with us!" Well, Mrs. Bogdanek said that when she saw the bear she almost had heart failure. Finally the bear ambled off. After that they got a couple of dogs for their yard.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller homesteaded at Rahab about the same time as the Bogdanek family. Also Jim and Bob Megines. One was a bachelor and the other was married with no family. Another bear scare happened to Mrs. Megines, who was a city girl. She had come with her husband to live in a little cabin that the brothers had built. The men were trapping most of the time. One time while they were away, Mrs. Megines looked up to see a bear looking in through the only window in the cabin. She got so scared she bolted the door and hid under the bed. She later told her husband that she could hear the bear rummaging and scraping on the walls for hours. She stayed under the bed until the men came home in the evening. It wasn't long after that the Megines left this area. Whether the bears had anything to do with it or not, I couldn't really say.



Bill, Steve and John Bogdanek.

My escapades as a trapper lasted quite a spell. I never really made that much money at it but did manage to make enough for spending money. I still had two hundred gopher tails which I had brought with me when we moved from Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan government paid two cents a tail, but somehow I didn't get a chance to sell them before we left. I was broken hearted when I found out the Alberta government didn't pay a cent for them. That was a lost fortune for me!

The creek running through our land was a natural place for my trap line. All I ever did get in my traps were weasles, quite a few rabbits and an odd squirrel. Weasles were what I really wanted as you could sell a good pelt for twenty-five to seventy-five cents each. Rabbits were five cents each. I'd get up at the crack of dawn every day to go and inspect my line and would be back in time for breakfast. I had to go early to the traps in order to get the animals out before they froze solid. If the animals froze, you would have to thaw them before skinning them. My mother was an immaculate housekeeper and would not tolerate my weasles in her kitchen. I had Dad help me set up an air-tight hearter in the pig barn so I could skin and stretch the skins in the barn. The pigs didn't seem to mind at all!

It was in February, 1933, that I had gone out to check my trap line, oblivious to the unusual activities going on that early in the day. In fact, anything going on, unless it was outside, was of no importance to me. I must say that I was quite ignorant of the facts of life and most definitely was not told about the birds and the bees. As I came home from my trap line that morning, I could hear what definitely sounded like a rabbit crying. I tore into the house to investigate, and found the sound was coming from the bedroom. I was stopped from entering the bedroom but was told that I had a new baby sister. Grandma Noga as we called her, was the attending midwife. I'll never forget the morning my sister, Emily was born.

In the spring of 1933, Grandpa Melnyk came to visit us. The same Grandpa who told my father that he was crazy to start again in the wilderness. Dad had told him that he'd leave the land at Rosthern to the grasshoppers. Grandpa came by train, and Dad and I were there to meet him. When we started for home down that God forsaken trail, the mosquitoes came out in hoards and you had to keep your mouth closed or you would gag on them. At time you couldn't keep your eyes open. We used to break

off branches with leaves on them and use them to brush the mosquitoes away. We weren't even half way home when Grandpa started to beef and complain about the mosquitoes and the bad condition of the road. By the time we got home, he had both a stomach and back ache from the roughness of the wagon going over the stumps. It's funny how a person can get used to things like that, as Dad and myself were not bothered at all. Grandpa stayed for about three weeks. He told us it was no place for him and a person had to be completely nuts to live in this forsaken country. We were quite sure that we would not be seeing him for a long time. Lo and behold, about four months later we received a letter from him asking Dad if he could come back to Rahab and live with us. Our house was not very large, so my mother told Dad that it was fine, but only if Dad would build Grandpa a house of his own. It could be in the yard. Dad built one and it did not take him very long to do it. We named it the "Gabina", which in Ukranian means "Shack". The name stuck and we still refer to it as the Gabina. I remember Grandpa putting the final touches on the roof. He split poplar trees in half lengthwise and then notched them out into sort of a trough. That way he could put two halves notched sides up and one facing down, tying the first two together. Surprisingly, the Gabina roof never leaked.

I enjoyed having Grandpa around. Maybe it was because I was his favorite grandson. He always had candy to give me. In most cases, I shared it with other kids. I spent a lot of time with him, as he knew and did a lot of things that I had never seen done before. He had immigrated to Canada from the Ukraine in 1902. He knew how to make everything from door locks to building bridges; from tanning moose hides to sewing harness. He also made moccasins and mitts, and wove hats out of carefully selected slough hay. Even though I was quite young, I learned how to do most of the things he did. We made bob sleighs and wagon wheels with wooden spokes. I learned how to fashion axe handles. He made us a flail which is a device used in the old country to thresh grain. It was manipulated by hand. In the winter time he would flood a piece of flat ground about the size of a grain bin and lay down about four bundles of grain with the heads pointing in the same direction. He would then commence swinging the flail. Although it was a weird contraption, it worked quite well. It looked so easy, but there was a knack to using it. I remember the first time that I tried the "Tseap", as it was called in Ukranian. I got one end of the darn thing across the head and a nice "goose-egg" for quite awhile! It didn't take long to catch on to how to use it. After the grain was threshed, he would screen it and let the wind blow the chaff away. That was our first threshing machine in our homesteading days.

In 1934, Grandpa was seventy-two years old, but so physically fit it was hard to believe. He would walk to Belloy twice a week, never accepting a ride. He always brought home a ten pound bag of sugar and a bag of peppermint candies. If you are wondering why he needed all that sugar, he was making moonshine. It seems to me that he always had a batch on the go. He enjoyed his drinks. Many an evening when I would visit him, he



This trophy size bear got 17 of Bogdanek's pigs before they got him.

would be in a singing mood and I would have to sing along with him. When he had a few drinks he was certainly happy and would tell me of his life experiences in the old country. His stories were very exciting and he was a great story teller.

We kids used to fool around on the grass after supper. Once in awhile we would try head stands and Grandpa would come out of his Gabina and show us how. Would you believe he could not only do a head stand, but could also walk on his hands with his feet straight up! He could do cart wheels to perfection. Steve and I used to bruise our heads and just about break our necks trying to accomplish them. We never did master those feats.

Grandpa read a lot of Ukranian papers and other books. In the later years of his life his vision wasn't too good for reading, so I used to read the Ukranian paper to him. It seems when he had a few drinks he would always complain about his eye sight. I would find it extremely funny because at long distances he could see just as good as I could. One time he said,

"You see that big tree on the hill over there? I can hardly see it at all!"

That was for sure he could hardly see it. It was so far away I could hardly see it myself!



Emily Melnyk - 1953.

My grandpa made me the first pair of skates I ever owned, not that I ever became a good skater. One time we were sitting by the heater in his Gabina and we got to talking about skis and skates. Like any other young boy I was always loaded with questions and asking what they did in the old country for amusement. When he told me that one of the things they did was skate, I immediately wanted to know what he did with his skates. He sort of laughed and said that they used to make skates. I wanted a pair right then. The next day he made me a pair of skates out of moose ribs. He fastened these to my shoes with leather lacing and also made a pair for himself. He then taught me how to skate. He could skate circles around me. He hadn't forgotten how, but it took me quite awhile to learn.

My grandpa was always on skis during the winter months. He would ski over to Tony Kropelnicki's place and they would visit and talk about the changes that took place in the old country after Grandpa left. Tony was



Grandpa Melnyk on skis.



Grandma Rawlyk and Grandpa Melnyk - 1943.

more or less from the same part of the country as Grandpa, but had immigrated to Canada twenty-eight years later. They would have a few drinks during the visit and I remember one time he had a few too many. It was a cold winter's day when he left Tony's place on his skis and got lost.

Before I go any further, I will have to tell you of the conditions that we used to live with during those early days. There was a patch of peat land that I later named "Hell's Acres," where the peat moss went down to a depth of seven feet. In the process of clearing land and burning brush, the peat soil caught on fire. It burned continuously for fifteen years. With the right humidity and a calm day or evening, the smog from this burning peat land would settle over the entire community. The smog was so heavy that not even a flash-light or a kerosene lantern could penetrate the gloom. Visibility was nil as you could not see farther than your nose.

It was on one of these days of heavy smog that Grandpa got lost. He didn't follow his ski tracks home and wandered off the trail. He had missed our yard by about three quarters of a mile, but still retained his sense of direction because he was directly north of our house. I had known that Grandpa wasn't home, and being a real worry wart, I had wandered outside to check and see if he

was coming. As soon as I was outside, I heard him hollering. I thought that he was in one of his happy singing moods but soon realized that his tone of voice was not a happy one. He was calling my name in a voice of distress and fear. I knew immediately that he was in some sort of trouble and it did not take me long to get on my heavy clothes, put on my skis and find a lantern. It took me only a short time to reach him as he was calling my name the entire time. I found him sitting in the snow all played out and saying he couldn't walk any farther. He was certainly glad to see me. Once he had warmed his hands on the lantern and after some coaxing, he followed my ski tracks home. Young as I was, I really gave him a lecture that he remembered and one that he would mention to me many times in the years that followed.

Our roads in those days left a lot to be desired. Actually, all we had was a wagon trail with ruts pounded into the soil like two furrows. More than likely you would find stumps in between these ruts. The stumps would be cut down just low enough so the wagon could straddle them. If there was a creek you would have to ford it even if the horses had to swim. If the wagon was loaded, this was out of the question. The farmers would all get together and drop a bunch of logs into the water. In that way they could cross without the wagon sinking out of sight. This worked fine as long as the water was low, but during the spring run off the farmers would go through the same procedure. After the freeze-up in the fall of 1933, my grandpa decided that as a winter project he would build a bridge across the Vixen Creek. The only condition was that my dad would have to make sure that there were enough logs by the creek for pilings, stringers and floor. He was going to build it even with the top of each bank. In other words, a high level bridge so the spring water would go under it and not interfere with the bridge itself in any way. This was quite an undertaking. Grandpa would build fires to thaw the frozen ground where the pilings were to be driven. Since it was close to forty-five feet from bank to bank, it had to have two

rows of pilings. He had fires burning in that creek for a month before he dug the actual holes part way down. He then sharpened the posts which were about twelve inches in diameter. Next came what I call a post mall. Actually it was a log about twenty-four inches across and four feet long with four handles on it. After this, he built scaffolds which four men stood on as they lifted the post mall. After the posts were all in, the rest of the bridge fell into place quickly. It was a good bridge and the entire community used it. In fact, it was a masterpiece of work. However, after the second spring it was built, the creek flooded it's banks by a couple of feet and a log jam formed upstream for a quarter of a mile. The bridge finally gave way as the pressure snapped the pilings off. It was heart breaking to see that bridge go. We did get over the shock, and by the next winter Grandpa and Dad started on another bridge. They built the new one stronger and better yet. It stood up well and was used for many years. Eventually the Department of Highways built a bridge on the road allowance where it was supposed to be.

This created another problem as the bridge was just east of "Hell's Acres", which you could not cross. Farmers had to haul gumbo dirt into the peat as you could not build a road out of peat moss. Since the fires were still burning in the peat, they would undermine the road. When the fire finally burned out at the gumbo, about five feet of ashes were left. On a wet year it was like quick sand.

I remember an Indian couple that rode into our yard during what we called our monsoons. They were on horseback and were leading a pack horse. They told Dad that they had lost one horse in the ashes. There was nothing that could be done, so they pitched a tent on a hill in our pasture and stayed for about a week until the rains let up. I don't know what they intended to eat, but I never saw them with any food. I took them whatever my mother would pack in a basket, such as milk, bread and whatever there was to spare. We did this every day until they moved on. I wonder if they are still living and if they remember me at all. It would be nice to know.

Our summers were always spent clearing more land. It was a very tedious job. It took every spare minute we had and was a family affair. Everyone pitched in, no matter how small you were. You were expected to pick sticks according to your size. Small children picked small sticks and threw them on to the fire. It was fun watching the

sparks flying high and the smoke from the fire would keep the mosquitoes away. My dad even bought me an axe that was smaller in size and lighter in weight than the usual axe. I could swing that axe all day long where I used to play out in half a day with the heavy one. I indeed was a fortunate fellow.

We had stump pullers to help us get the big stumps out with a minimal amount of chopping. Our puller was a home made affair that worked on the same principle as a winch, except it was manipulated by hand. It worked on the leverage principle with cable winding around a wooden block that was turning.

Later on, Dad got a couple of men to clear ten acres for us. The deal was that when they finished, they were to take a cow for their work. The cow in question was one of those rang-a-tangs that knew no fence and nothing could stop her. However, she was a good milker. Being what she was, Dad thought he really made a good deal. Where he slipped up in the deal was that room and board was to be supplied by him. Those two culprits would sleep until noon; work a couple of hours and then lie around in the shade, claiming it was too hot to work in the sun. They bummed around our place all summer, getting free room and board. Finally, Dad gave them two weeks to finish the job and clear out or he was calling off the deal. Well, you should have seen those two work! They had to, as the agreement was verbal. When they finally left, both Mom and Dad agreed that they had been taken in! That was a lesson never forgotten.

After a trail was cleared to Belloy, we got to know a few more settlers to the west of us. There was a group of bachelors, namely: Henry and Jim Ferguson, Chris



The Emerson Family. There were 13 children in this family. Today the youngest is 61. The eldest is 83 and all are living.



The Larson Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Palmer, Bert, George, Louis, Selmer. Front Row: Esther, Tilda and Ruth.

Bankhead, Otto Nolde, and Mike Kelly. There were also the Howards, who had two children at the time - Jim and Alice. Jack and Mae hadn't arrived yet. Alice is now Mrs. Don Berner. There was a large family of Urnesses, the Fred Kozeluk, John Sinkevichs, Justin Sinkevich and later the Kostash family.

Ross and Maude Archibald owned a store in Belloy. Bill Ripley had the post office, and Mrs. Rouleau had the cafe business. She had four daughters, Toots (later Mrs. E. Bodette), Gladys (later Mrs. Barney Stoffer), Mary



The Melnyk Family - 1940. Left to Right: Orist, Natalie, Emily, Grandpa, Steve, Axenty and Sally.

(later Mrs. Frances Dumas), Clair (later Mrs. Ralph Jackson) and one son, Omer.

Bill Wortman also lived at Belloy. Some other old-timers were: Joe Jasbeck, Archie Robertson, Chris Knutson, and then later, Ivor Pierson, Mr. Bice, Omer Pauline, Earl Stoffer and Jack Culshaw.

I used to enjoy the trip into Belloy as Archibald's store had a little of just about everything in it.

Belloy also had a grain elevator and a water tower where the steam engines on the railway filled up. Belloy had a hall and the Archibalds had a good orchestra. Ross was a music teacher and he could play just about any instrument. His son Allan, was just as gifted. Joe Jasbeck was a music teacher, too. The Belloy community had a good baseball team, and would have their sports day where the Steele School used to be, on Highway 49 between Belloy and Wanham, one mile west of Belloy corner. The Sports day was a big outing and people came from miles away. To me it looked like there were horses and wagons for acres. Besides the baseball games, they also had men's races, men and ladies' three-leg races, games of chance and of course the big treat - ice-cream.

There was another event that we went to several times over the years, and that was the Fox Creek Stampede. It was held one mile west of the Eaglesham corner on the north side of the highway. It was to me, a great event with good bucking horses from local stock. They drew large crowds at these functions.

Something else I looked forward to in those days, were the visits by Ross Archibald. Ross now lives in Grande Prairie. He would travel around during the winter time with a team of horses and a caboose. The caboose was a cab-like covered sled. Ross was a Jehovah Witness and he travelled around distributing their literature. He would always pull into our yard about supper time and would spend the night at our place. Although our religions were not the same, he never tried to instill his beliefs onto my parents. In fact, religion was never discussed. It was a very enjoyable evening as Ross was an educated man and a very good sport. He could play a "mean" fiddle, and as my dad was not a bad fiddler also, they spent many an hour with their violins. Ross was also a good checker player. We would play checkers until I couldn't see anything but squares in front of my eyes. Ross taught me a lot about the game. I even got quite good at it and he let

me win once in awhile. I always waited for the days when he would come again. I don't think I will ever forget the good times we had, nor will I forget Ross Archibald.

In every community there used to be a favorite gathering place. When I think back, our home had to have been one of those places. It was probably because my parents spoke English as well as Ukranian, while most of the other settlers spoke Ukranian, Polish or French only. My mother was a superb home-maker. She excelled in cooking, baking and cake decorating. She was also a good seamstress. I remember her sewing dresses, blouses and shirts for just about the whole community. You just named what you wanted and she would try until she made it ... and with no patterns either. She didn't have one of the fancy sewing machines like you can buy now, but it was a good machine just the same. People didn't have much money for fabrics. Women would bring white flour and sugar bags which they had bleached and boiled until the printing came off. Mom would dye them and make whatever they needed. Some flour bags were printed or checked with a design but you had to be lucky to get enough of one kind to match. An upcoming wedding or special party would bring girls to our house until the wee hours of the morning. I remember lots of laughing while they were custom fitting their clothes. Mom really enjoyed these fun times. The same thing went on in the making of flowers before a wedding. There were flowers all over the house and we men of the family felt like moving out, as there didn't seem to be room for us. Around Easter, the same thing went on with the coloring of Easter eggs - "Pesanka's", they called them, and these decorated eggs were everywhere you looked. There is a saying, "Busy people never get bored." Believe me, we were never bored!

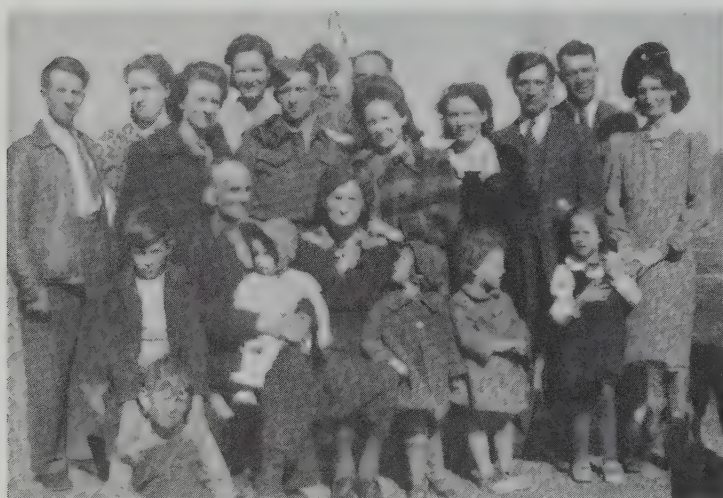


Early Settlers - 1932. Left to Right: John Noga, Peter Noga, Stanley Socha, Albert Popek, Kost Bidulka, Joe Bilinski, Mike Kievet, Axenty Melnyk, Mike Viretko, John Tass, Nick Bogdanek, Annie Bidulka, Alice Bidulka, Elsie Noga, Mike Urchshyn, Mary Bihun, Grandma Noga, unknown, Rose Noga, Grandpa Noga, Mrs. Annie Bihun, Mrs. Nancy Melnyk, Mrs. Sophie Bogdanek, Mrs. Frances Bilinski. Children, Left to Right: Orist Melnyk, Joe Bidulka, Sally Melnyk, Steve Melnyk and Josie Bilinski.

We didn't have a radio either. People visited a lot more, maybe because they depended on one another for survival. There were evenings of card games. I think cribbage and King Pedro were the two most popular

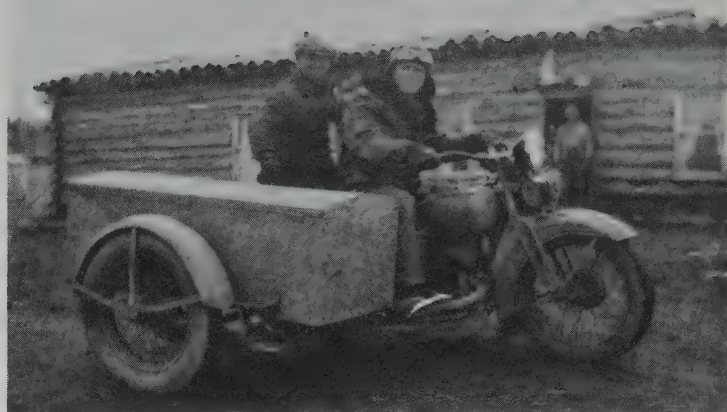
games played. There were the good story tellers or someone got hold of a good book and one person would read aloud while the others listened, entranced by the story. When the reader tired, another would take their place, and so on, until the book was finished. Books were hard to come by and had to be ordered. They were advertised in the papers and Dad would order them from Winnipeg or Edmonton. We learned from the weekly newspaper whether the rest of the world was still turning or not.

When we got the paper, we would read everything in it, and sometimes twice over. We got the Ukranian Farmer, Free Press, Country Guide and of course, the Farmer's Almanac. Most important was the Eaton's catalogue. I think it was the most widely read book in the country, and it was free! Not only could you look at the pretty pictures, but you could get ideas on how to make and fashion clothes, or see new inventions. Sometimes you just gazed at your favorite page and let your imagination run wild. It was really a wish book to many.



Early Settlers in Rahab. Back Row, Left to Right: Joe Prim and wife Violet, Rose Alba McQuitty, Marie Gerard, Marcel Gerard, Dolores Gerard, Florence and Paul Gerard, Joe Thibeault and wife Orlandise. Sitting in Front: Edgar and Blanche Gerard with grandchildren - Fern and John Thibeault, Gail Gerard, Margaret and Hilda Thibeault.

Whenever we didn't have company, the evenings were probably spent helping Mom with the processing of wool into garments. To people who have never done this, it would seem like a never-ending and boring job. It was time consuming, but very interesting. We always had to buy our wool as we never kept sheep. The wool, being quite dirty and smelly had to be washed several times by hand to get it clean. (Washing machines were unheard of then.) It was dried and carded or brushed into batts. Carding was a hard job although there was good carding equipment available if you had the money. We used the old fashioned, two-hand brush style carder which was made of wood with spring wires as brushes. It seemed that any slight mis-judgement would make the brush rub over your fingers. After awhile my fingers felt as if half the skin was rubbed off and they were sore as the devil! After carding, came the actual spinning of the wool into yarn, and that was an art of its own. The first couple of



Paul Gerard in doorway, his father Edgar on motor bike with Father Bourge. The floor in Edgar Gerard's home was of poles cut smooth on sides.

years Mom never owned a spinning wheel, so we spun the wool with the old fashioned rounded stick. One end was fastened to a sharp point and the other had a rounded finish. You would turn the stick in the palm of one hand while you guided the wool with the other. Once you got the hang of it, you could go quite fast.

It would fascinate me to watch some of the ladies operate a spinning wheel. It was operated by foot, and everything would work smoothly and rhythmically. Thinking back now, I would describe the whole procedure as a computer on legs! It would spin yarn with feet, hands and mouth all working at the same time. You could visit with someone, or if no one was around, a book could be read during the whole working process. After the spinning came the grand finale. You made sweaters, socks, mitts, scarves, toques or whatever you wanted.

I used to knit my own socks and mitts all the time. It was a real challenge as I had problems with the thumbs on the mitts, and the heels of the socks. I do believe that those socks and mitts were a lot warmer than the ones we have now. I never used to get as cold then as I do now. Could it be the difference in age? No, it can't be. I choose to believe that the socks and mitts I made were warmer.

Going back to the settlement of Rahab itself. It was in May, 1930, that an excursion of French settlers from Quebec came to settle here. The men came first while the women and children followed two months later.

There were the Charles Brochus and their three sons, Charles, Morris, Joseph and their daughter, Jandack. Mr. and Mrs. Boudreault with daughter, Pierrette. The Willie Billiers and daughter, Maria. Mr. and Mrs. Luke Tremlaux, and their two sons. Tom Bergeron and his son, Richard. Tom Teviesh and his mother. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Nirrow, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Thibeault and son, Raymond. Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Gerard with their nine children - Joe-Prim, Paul, Donnat, Claude, Marcial, Louisia, Rozelba, and Deloris. The remaining daughter was Mrs. Joe Thibeault. There was Mrs. Bouchard and her four sons - Leidgie, Henry, Charles, Gaspard and one daughter, Rosana. Mrs. Bouchard later became Mrs. Joe Mayer of Wanham. Gaspard later operated the cafe in Wanham. The Brochu family is the same family that owned the store and post office at Rahab. The first time

that I remember Rahab you couldn't tell if anyone else was there besides the Brochu family. The bush was so heavy, you could not see the streets and avenues that should have been there.

I mostly remember the Gerard boys because of their sleigh dogs. The older boys were grown men and I was fascinated by their unusual source of transportation, as neither my parents nor I had ever seen dogs pulling a sleigh. It was a beautiful sight watching four or six dogs pulling a sleigh down a country trail. Joe-Prim Gerard used to haul fish from Slave Lake with this method of transportation; selling fish all the way down the line. If you couldn't buy fish for lack of money, he would swap for anything of value, such as cow hides and horse hair. I really don't remember how many dogs the Gerard family used to keep around their place, but it had to be between twelve and fifteen. Donnat and Claude used dogs for transportation also. Sometimes they would mush up to our place at about three o'clock in the afternoon and ask Dad and Mom to come to a party that evening, and to bring the fiddle. Nine times out of ten, Mom and Dad would go, and Dad would play the violin while everyone else would dance until the wee hours of the morning.

A party on a moments notice was not unusual in those days. No special reason was necessary, and everyone was welcome. Refreshments and food were plentiful. Everyone was just happy to see one another. Henry and Oscar Ferguson visited our place frequently. They often



Ride 'em cowboy! Joe Thibeault and his son Raymond.

stopped to pick up my folks and away they would go to one of these parties. Most of the parties were held in the winter time.

While returning from one of these affairs in the wee hours of the morning, the Fergusons and my parents, (feeling no pain) reached the place I have previously referred to as "Hell's Acres." The smoke was so thick that the horses couldn't see the road and consequently wandered off the trail. No one noticed the fact until the sleigh tipped over scattering everyone and everything into the snow. Dad's violin was smashed in the process. After the incident, my dad always claimed that his precious violin was in exactly twenty-three pieces. He must have counted them as it took Henry and him a week to glue them back together again. It turned out like new again, and to this day I play that same violin. Every time I pick it up I think back to Dad and how he smashed it.

Henry Ferguson was good on the fiddle himself, so he was always a welcome sight at a party. People were not fussy then as to what type of floor they danced on. In

most cases, it was made out of rough lumber. You danced to whatever music that was available and had no worries booking anyone in advance. The band was usually a two piece orchestra.

One day Dad and the neighbor to the west, John Mazurkevich, decided to make a musical instrument called the "Dulcimer." It consisted of about eighty steel strings, and you played it by striking the strings with two fancy ivory sticks that you held in each hand. It sounded very nice and had a mellow tone to it. I thought it was just beautiful when played as accompaniment to a violin.



Dog teams used by the Gerard boys.

After some practice, John Mazurkevich got into the swing of playing the instrument remarkably well. A few years later banjos and guitars were used as they were easy to transport and consequently replaced the "dulcimer."

During the summer of 1933 and '34, my father used to get an occasional job with the N.A.R. Usually for a two week stretch at a time. In most cases he would work only when there was a derailment and the track would get torn out. These derailments were caused mostly by wash-outs or slides on either side of Watino Hill. Watino was then called "Smokey."

It was during one of these jobs that Dad met a bachelor farmer, Jack Thorne, who lived in the Smokey District. He was considered to be quite a well off farmer and he owned a Case hand fed threshing machine. Hand fed meant that one man, holding a sharp knife, stood on a platform ahead of the cylinder. When a bundle was thrown to him he would cut the twine, and feed the



Mr. Axenty Melnyk on the violin, son Orist on the guitar and Bill Semack on right at the wedding of Stanley and Jenny Pierog at Webster.

bundle into the cylinder of the machine by hand. Even though the threshing machine that Dad left behind in Saskatchewan was worth three times more than the Case, my dad swapped machines with Jack Thorne. The condition of the swap was that Mr. Thorne pay for the transportation of the Case thresher from Watino to Rahab and also the transportation of Dad's machine from Rosthern to Watino.

Now that was a big step ahead at that time, or so it seemed. To think that we would again have a threshing machine to separate grain from the straw was a dream come true. When this Case thresher arrived on a flat car in Rahab, I think that half the country was out to help Dad unload it and get it home. Unloading it was not that bad, even though there was no unloading platform at that time. Getting the machine home was another matter. The back wheels were wider than the standard wagon width. It could not be taken home on wheels as the so called road was only the width of the standard wagon wheel. The men had to take the back axle completely off and put skids under the back of the machine. They could not use the tractor to pull it home because of the deep mud holes. They finally hitched the four biggest horses they could find in tandem to the machine. They only managed to tip the machine over twice before getting it home. Dad spent the next two weeks straightening everything that was bent and putting it back into condition.



Congregation at the Ukrainian Church in Codesa. Services were held about four times a year.

That fall things looked good and the sight of straw coming out of the pipe and clean grain going into the bin was very gratifying. Even though our acreage was small, the crop was good and we never needed fertilizer. The biggest problem was how to keep the crop from lodging as it took forever to ripen.

In our community, and in Belloy, farmers would stack grain in bundles in huge stacks, spaced just far enough apart so you could spot the threshing machine between the stacks. The threshing of grain would go on for most of the winter as the machine was moved from one settler's place to the next. After he got the threshing machine, Dad would spend the largest part of the winter threshing grain. The area he covered during one season would be from immediate area surrounding our homestead; west toward Belloy, one and a half miles south of the Belloy corner; then east to where Karpinsky's and Hass's lived; north of the Birch Hills, then back towards home again. Whenever Dad needed repairs



Early pioneers in Rahab area - Mr. and Mrs. Sam Boudreault with Father Marcolt and two nuns.

for his tractor, he would walk to Spirit River. He walked down the railway track and it would take him a day and a half for the return trip.

I talk about the first ten years in the Peace country as years of hardship, but we accepted what life dealt us, and made the best out of a difficult situation. There were happy days and there were days of sadness. Our family had both.

In the summer of 1934, Mom became ill. At first no one thought it was serious but Mom kept getting progressively worse. Going to the doctors in those days was just about out of the question as the train went west on Tuesday and east on the following Friday. Mom, however, did go to see the doctor at Spirit River and about two weeks later went to Grande Prairie, but there seemed to be no help for her. She heard there was a doctor at Sexsmith so she tried her luck there. By this time she had got to the point where she could hardly walk and there was no relief in sight. In desperation, Mom went to McLennan and from there on to Edmonton.

It was a very hard year for us kids as Steve was quite young and Emily was just a baby. We hired one of the neighbor girls, Elsie Noga to help us as Dad had more work than he could handle and couldn't look after a family as well. Sally and I were not very old but we worked hard and when Dad wasn't home, we did the chores.

After spending a month in the hospital in Edmonton, Mom was told that there was nothing that they could do for her because they could not find anything wrong. She accepted the fact that she would probably never walk again and might not live much longer. She decided that she would at least spend her last days at home with her young family.

She arrived at Rahab by train and barely made it off as she was so doubled over and could not straighten up. Mrs. Edgar Gerard happened to be at the station that day. She was horrified when she saw the condition my mother was in. Mother was still a very young woman, but illness had aged her tremendously. Mrs. Gerard had heard that Mom was ill in the hospital and was not getting better. After one look at her she knew what Mom's problem was. Mrs. Gerard could not speak one word of English but she insisted, through interpreters,

that Mom had to come and say at her place for at least two weeks while she treated her. She explained to Mom that she had treated many women in Quebec that suffered from the same disorder. Mom was elated to hear this. She spent a few days home with us before going to Mrs. Gerard's, where she was treated with remedies made from herbs, plants, and even pitch from spruce trees. She followed Mrs. Gerard's advice and stayed two weeks.

After she returned home, Mom told us how the Gerard family had treated her as one of their own. They were wonderful people, the kind who pioneered in this country, and to whom we were forever grateful. Within six months of Mrs. Gerard's miraculous treatment, Mom was once again able to do her work at home and enjoy parties and dances again. This may all sound unbelievable, but that is how it happened.

Another incident I recall, that could have turned out for the worse, happened one evening shortly after supper. My dad took his axe and decided to chop out a few stumps that were in our front yard. As usual, I was there, picking sticks, fooling around and just having fun. Dad had chopped the roots from around one stump and took a swing with the axe, blunt end towards the stump to knock it out of the ground. The stump was looser than he thought for when he swung the axe with all of his might, there was no resistance. The axe slipped and flew out of Dad's hands. I was about twenty feet behind him and the



Steve Melnyk and his father rescuing grain during a flood.

steel blade of the axe hit me right under my nose. I don't remember what happened after that, but Dad related the incident to me a couple of days later. He said that when he turned to look for the axe, I was lying on the ground motionless. His first thought was that he had killed me. The axe had cut right through to the inside of my mouth. There was no way they could take me to a doctor with a wagon at night. I was unconscious for two days and they were sure I was dead. I'm sure the only thing going for me was that I was still warm. I drank milk and broth though a straw for a long time after that, but I survived to tell of the incident. I immediately think of the saying, "Only the strong survive!" It sure applied in this instance.

The year 1934, without a doubt in my mind, is most remembered for it's progressive change. We had a school and a church, allowing the children of the community to become literate and obtain an education for the future.



John Noga and Axenty Melnyk with a young moose - 1930.

By this time, most of the children were relatively grown up but could neither read nor write. I was considered lucky as I had attended school in Saskatchewan for one and one half years and could already read. Mom was also teaching us at home. Besides teaching English, she taught Sally and me to read and write in Ukranian. Mom, although Canadian born, did not have much schooling herself. There was no law requiring attendance at school when you were of school age. My mother's parents were very religious, therefore she was taught to read and write through the church. Whatever book education my mother missed, her practical experience made up for. Dad also was a self-educated man. He attended school for all of two years, graduating with honors from grade three. This was the extent of his schooling but none-the-less, he didn't seem to have any problem reading writing or with mathematics. Dad was very civic minded and was involved in his community. When the men first decided they needed a school for their children, they also decided that they needed a church. To kill two birds with one stone, it was decided that a church would be built and used as a school for five days out of every week. The logs for the church were taken out in January and February of 1938. They were from massive trees, and had to be hand hewn. Working with logs seemed to be everyone's trade to an extent, but some of the men who came from Quebec excelled in their proficiency in the use of a broad-axe. Everyone around helped raise the walls and get the roof on. Next came the tricky parts. I know for a fact that Joe Bilinsky did most of the finer work on the inside of the church, and on the altar and the windows. It was a masterpiece in it's own right considering the rudimentary equipment and material that was available to them. There



Steve Melnyk on his horse "Shorty".

were two massive bi-fold doors constructed. When closed, the altar section of the church was separated from the rest of the building. The blackboards were hung over these doors. Except for the fancy windows, you couldn't tell you were inside a church and not an actual school. The desks were also constructed by hand. They were rather crude in style; comfort not having been in mind.

After a few months in a heated room, the tops of the desks warped and dried out, leaving cracks here and there and everywhere. If you put a pencil in the desk, it would roll and fall to the floor through one of the cracks. The desks were made to accommodate two pupils. If the two at a desk were small and one happened to be right handed and the other left handed, you could manage with a minimum of difficulty. If you were otherwise, you had a tough time finding space to work on. The desks were just not wide enough.

The next step was the formation of a school district, allowing us to have qualified school teachers, books and other supplies. The school district was named the Brochu School District. There was quite a feeling of excitement and nervousness for the children as they waited with anticipation for school to begin, as most did not really know what to expect. Since we kids at home and around our place were expected to walk to school, a long distance of five miles, a good path was needed. The men had to build us walks across the slough and pot holes. They cut down big trees, falling them across the impassable places. These trees were more or less over-lapping each other, allowing us to walk on them and keeping our feet dry when we arrived at school. However, for the first while, it didn't work out as the builders planned. There was a knack to crossing these unusual walks. You had to have a true sense of balance, and be as light-footed as an acrobat. The trees were crooked, had knots in them and in many places, were suspended across other wind-falls. To say the least, they were shaky as could be! The first two weeks that we kids walked on those logs was a riot, for when we got to school, half of us resembled drowned rats, the other half - pigs that just came out of a mire! On

but not that often.

Our first teacher at the Rahab school was Mrs. Lucas, who stayed at the Sam Boudreault place, which was not far from the school. The children who were enrolled in the school the first year were: Joe and Isador Bidulka, John, Tony and Josie Bilinsky, Mary Bihun, Rose Noga, Pierette Boudreault, Richard Bergeron, Glen Knutson, Charles, Joseph, and Morris Brochu, Rozelba, Donat, Claude, Marcelle and Delores Gerard, Henry, Charles and Gaspard Bouchard, Bill, Melvin and Harvey Lewis. Marie Bodette, Maria, Billy, Denis and Denver Snyder, Laura and Rane Sockette, (Laura later married Hermel Gerard, and the operated a hotel at Wanham for many years. Rane married Joe Labreque from Spirit River.) Making up the enrollment were Sally and myself. That made over thirty pupils.

Going back in time, we had to be up at six in the morning in order to go to school. It took us an hour to get ready and we had to have a good breakfast, for it took us two hours to walk there. Now, my children don't bother with breakfast before catching the bus to school, but we were ready for another breakfast as soon as we got to school I remember having a good sized lunch kit, usually a yellow five pound lard pail. Mom would pack it full of sandwiches to do for lunch as well as for the walk home after school. Even so, I always ran out of food and was starved by the time I got home. On the way home I used to munch on rose hips off the rose bushes whenever they were available. There were lots of rose bushes, but hardly any other type of berries along our trail to school. School dismissed at four in the afternoon. We got home by six and ate supper. By that time it was time to do chores or swing an axe for a couple of hours, clearing more land. There was never time for boredom to set in. When the weather was nice our walk to school was tolerable, but there were days when it rained and rained, then it was sheer torture! We had no rain coats but we did have rubber boots. In the winter it would storm and be



Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lucas. Mrs. Lucas was our first teacher in Rahab.

several occasions, Sally and I had to stop at our neighbor's place on the way to school and dry our clothes out before continuing on our way again. Believe it or not, within a short time, we kids could have put Tarzan and his apes to shame. Well, we did slip off once in awhile,



Mr. Sam Boudreault and daughter Pierette (Bouchard) cutting grain with a binder.

cold as can be, but we still walked to school. If you started to feel the cold, you just walked faster to keep warm.

During the winter we usually had lots of snow, but what we really looked forward to was the chinooks.

These made the winters shorter and they seemed more tolerable. In Saskatchewan, chinooks were unheard of and my mom could never get over the fact that winter could have such wonderful days. Our yard escaped the fury of the cold winter winds due to the heavy surrounding bush. Winter here was a different sort compared to the prairie winter of Saskatchewan. Feeling sorry for us kids walking such a distance to school in the winter time, Dad built us a shack in Rahab and we stayed there and batched while attending school. It didn't turn out so good, though, as our cooking left much to be desired. We hadn't fridge or power to keep our food, and canned store food was not to be had as you needed money for it. Another problem was keeping the place warm. By afternoon of each day, everything was frozen solid in that dreary little shack.

The following term, our parents farmed us kids out to a family by the name of Teiviesh, who lived half a mile from the school. Mr. Teiviesh spoke English while his mother spoke only French. It didn't take us long before we could understand her, and soon we could carry on a conversation in French. Occasionally, Tom would bring out his saxophone and play for us. I was always fascinated by this man's ability in playing this instrument. I loved music, but never did too well on that sax.

The following year we boarded at the Sam Boudreault



Mike Kieverts new house - after the original mouse haven.

home. We felt more at home there as they had a child our age, Pierette, to be friends with. Isador Bidulka boarded there also. The Boudreaults and the Tievieshs were very nice people with hearts of gold. They had to have to put up with us kids! They were as concerned for our welfare just as if we were their own children. Pierette Bondreault later married Roger Bouchard, and still lives in the vicinity. They raised eight children - two girls still at home and attending high school.

Once winter was over, spring always brought new challenges and new problems. Mother nature would unleash violent rain storms, causing flooding, and later on there would be periods of drought. To understand the significance of a flood in those days is to have experienced one at first hand. Then you would know how helpless a person can be when a flood situation develops. The settlers naturally built their farmsteads close to a water supply whenever possible. Our water supply was the same creek that wound its way from the N.A.R. Dam. This dam was built as a water supply for their own



Cattle drive down main street in Watino. Our house was at the right bottom of this picture.

use and the creek was a part of the dam also. One of our particular monsoons hit and it rained for ten days straight, and I mean it rained hard! All this moisture was fine until the water from south of Belloy ran into the dam and raised the water level. It consequently overflowed, washing the dirt barrier wide open. To put it mildly, "All hell broke loose!" The creek overflowed through many of the farmsteads. It flooded the Kellys, Howards, Fergusons, Kropelnickes, Mazurkeviches and our place was inundated. The Mazurkeviches cattle were stranded on little knolls and remained there, bawling for many days 'till hunger got the best of them and they were forced to swim to the yard which was on higher ground. The water on the hay meadows and fields was at a depth of five feet or more. It looked like I always imagined the wide Mississippi would look. Any buildings that were in the way of the main rush water were gone. Since our house was close to the creek, Dad moved Mom and us kids to Tony Kropelnicke's house. Tony's house was built on one of the biggest hills around, except maybe for the hill that Steve Howard's house stood on. We stayed at Tony's for a week while Dad and Grandpa stayed at the home place. Everything was sitting in water, and the floor level of the house was just about even with the water. Grandpa wouldn't leave the yard, and try as he might, Dad could not convince him to leave, even for night. Grandpa said that if necessary, he would sit on the tractor as the water could never move that! Eventually, there was a break in the sky and everybody let out a sigh of relief. It wasn't until two days later that the water



Orist by the Melnyk house in Watino - 1937.

dripped an inch and we knew that the worst was over and we could move back home. We have had heavy rains since, but conditions were completely different then. The wind falls, willows and old grass used to hold all the water back. When it did break loose, it broke all at one time. You could hear the water coming from miles away.

Now as if water wasn't enough to contend with, the early settlers would also have dry spells, about the middle of July. Then we had to concern ourselves with forest fires. To be quite honest, if someone asked me which was worse - floods, or fires, I would have to flip a coin. Fires possibly had to be worst, for after water recedes, you can clean the mess up and fix things up again. When a fire went through, it didn't matter if you lived on a hill or in a slough, everything in its path was cooked, including wildlife. All that was left were a few black stumps and a few windfalls here and there. To me it resembled a cemetery. Everything was so still. It was hard to get used to the open spaces as you could now see for miles around where once you were enclosed by timber. It meant death all around, not even leaving birds or insects.



First teacherage at Watino.

After experiencing one forest fire, you were always on the alert for others. You first smelled smoke, and during a dry spell, your heart skipped a beat. Smoke, then fire, and with a little breeze, you had the makings of a forest fire. Some people were very careless. They would light a brush pile and walk away leaving it unattended. There was always some such person in every community. Once the fire got going it would create its own wind, sending flames soaring thirty to forty feet into the air, igniting tree tops ahead of the ground fire.

Many a time, Dad and I would keep watch the entire night. The sound of falling trees was like gun fire. It sounded like an honest to goodness war! It didn't get dark at night, and would resemble the glow from a large city. I used to be scared and worried to no end. I can recall Dad and myself walking out towards the fire to check on the direction it was moving and how fast it was moving, always hoping for a heavy shower to slow the fire down.

One time we came across a cow moose. She would run off a ways, then flatten her ears back and come right back at us. I thought, "Well here we go, and not even a gun!" Dad wasn't afraid, and told me not to run as there must be a calf some place near by. We looked around, and sure enough we found it among a pile of windfalls. Dad grabbed it while I was yelling and swinging a big

stick and generally making as much noise as I could. That part was easy, for I was scared silly. I was sure the cow would charge. When Dad got the calf out into a clear place, we had to run away, as the calf wanted to follow



Nick Diduk beside his trappers cabin - some furs from the Smoky area.

us. We watched from a distance, and after awhile the cow led her calf away from the fire.

A similar incident occurred when Dad and I were going to Belloy. We came across a cow and calf which had got themselves surrounded by a fast fire. The cow kept running in and out of the flames but the calf wouldn't move. Dad and I jumped the fire line and got the calf out to the ground that had been burned over already. We felt quite safe as we had a gun along this time. Amazingly, this cow didn't even attempt to charge. She stood about thirty feet away and watched us move the calf out.

I often wondered how many of those poor animals perished during the period of those wicked fires. Luckily, most of the settlers escaped these fires with a minimal amount of loss except for an odd hay stack or granary.

It was several years later that a bigger fire, causing extensive damage, burned a path about four to five miles south of our farm. The sight of this one made chills run up and down our spines as we knew a few of the settlers who had to be in its path. This area was all heavy timber country. The smoke from the fire kept billowing upwards making the sun invisible to the eye. The fire was so intense, that it sounded like an earthquake rumbling along.

It is impossible for me to find words to describe this huge inferno with its great smoke. The fire started



Thompson's mink farm by the railroad bridge at Watino. (Dorian Wilde is the former Mrs. Thompson.)

northwest of Wanham and skirted the village of Wanham to the north, covering an area of about three miles towards the North Burnt River and then east towards Belloy.

It jumped the railroad track east of Belloy and was off on the south side of the track, thus spreading widely.

The Lewis family lived along the old highway which was about one mile north of what is now Highway 49. Their farmyard was completely burned out. This same fire continued for a number of miles east before it burned itself out.

It took fires like this to open land in this country but they did more harm than a person realized at that time. The heat from this particular fire was so extreme that it burned all the fibre out of the soil to a depth of a foot or more. We are still working at getting the fibre back into the soil. Looking back on this disastrous fire, it would be hard to estimate in dollars and cents the value of the timber lost.

One of these fires gave the community an unusual pet



Ben Hauser's Sawmill Crew. Sitting: John Bilinski. Standing, Left to Right: Bob Bryce, Bunny Fortier, Sanford Urness, Joe Mazurek, Clarence Alvin and Willard Urness, Orist Melnyk and Ben's uncle Carl.

that in normal circumstances would not have been chosen. Dad and John Noga were out in the bush looking for straight trees that they could cut for building when they came upon a moose calf about two days old. It appeared to be abandoned, and was so weak it could hardly stand. The men didn't know what to do with it, but knew that if left on its own, it would be dead in a couple of days. As it turned out, that calf wasn't about to be left on its own, and tried desperately to follow them. They felt sorry for the poor thing and ended up carrying it part of the way home. Finally, after bringing it home, there was the problem of what to do with it.

John at that time was living alone and Dad's family was still in Saskatchewan, so they took it to Joe Bilinskys place. There it was bottle fed, and grew quickly as a pet and was quite a nuisance. It would follow them every place they went and when it decided that it wasn't to be left behind, there was no getting away. It couldn't be kept in a corral as it could clear the fence. A moose cannot tolerate dogs at any time, and this particular one was no different. Any dog that was caught in the open was just a poor unfortunate dog. This moose wandered from yard to yard and occasionally snatched a meal with the pigs. Eventually it wandered away and we never saw it again.



Cook house at Hauser's mill. Mrs. Hauser with helper Mary Bassisty - 1940.

I can recall that in those days everyone had a dog or two, and some had more. One family in particular used dog hides to make footwear, mitts and jackets. These hides would be tanned to the best of their ability, which I must admit was a good job, even though I wasn't enthusiastic about the idea. Thinking back now, I know that it was a necessity. His children needed warm clothes and they had to walk quite a distance to school. This man simply did not have the money for all the necessities of living, and provided for his family as best he could. The only thing we kids could not understand was that dogs were supposed to be your pets. But that's life. There were many times when you did what you had to do, whether you liked it or not.

In 1936, my mom and dad were quite concerned about us children having to go through such hardships as walking to school. Also my brother, Steve was getting to an age where he should be attending school, too. My mother was never willing to accept the conditions that existed, and many a night when they thought we were sleeping, we could hear heated arguments concerning our access to education and the intolerable roads to school. It seems my mother won that round as Dad bought some lumber and built us a two room house in Watino.

He chose Watino as he was familiar with this town due to his occasional employment with the N.A.R. We had two lots of land in Watino, so we had enough space for our own garden. We kids were not overwhelmed about the idea of attending a new school, but were not given a choice. Mom moved along with us and we attended school during the term. During the summer holidays we would go back to the farm to help Dad.

Dad stayed on the farm all year, but would visit and bring firewood by sled and horse. The distance from Rahab to Watino at that time was about thirty-eight miles. Dad also brought meat to us as no one bought meat from a friendly butcher shop then. Everyone butchered their own pork, and everyone had chickens. Dad also brought grain for the chickens we kept at Watino.

We grew a terrific garden, with cucumbers, corn and tomatoes, which we could not grow out on the homestead. The garden supplied us with everything we needed for a comfortable living. I honestly believe that I would be four inches taller today, if it hadn't been for the fact that I wore my feet down lugging two five gallon pails of water every spare moment I had. Water for that

thirsty garden!

If you drive to Watino today, you will see the beautiful maples that Mom and I planted around our property. Mom had these little rooted maples shipped down from Rosthern, Saskatchewan by one of her nieces Mary Blocka.

Our house was a stone throw away from the railroad track and not far from the water tower. Every freight that came through would stop at the tower for water.

The men that rode the rail in those days, the "Dirty Thirties," looking for jobs, would wait until the freight train started to move and then jump into an empty box car for the next lap of their journey. There would sometimes be as many as twenty men on one freight. Some of these men would be first class bums that didn't know how to work, just rode the rail and lived on hand outs. Others were sincere family men who were destitute financially, and unable to find a job, but were determined not to give up. Many of them would come to our place and beg Mom to please give them something to eat



Bridge at Watino washed out in the '30's.

as they hadn't eaten for days. They didn't have a penny to their name and as the train would sometimes stay at Watino over night, they would do any chores to repay you for helping them in their time of need. You sometimes read in magazines and newspapers about what a rugged bunch of desperadoes the men that rode the rails were. I must say that in our experiences with them, they were perfect gentlemen. They usually told us of their misfortunes and plans.

There were at least one hundred and fifty men at Watino at all times, since they also crushed gravel for the N.A.R. at that time. It seemed that Mom fed hundreds of them in the three years that we lived there, and many a man would stop at our house a year later and offer Mom money for the food they ate. They would tell us where they had gotten a job, how they were making a little money, and were on their way back to their families. Mom never accepted money, and was only glad to hear that everything had turned out for the best. This is probably why we were never rich in money, but rich in friends. These same men would slip us kids a few dollars when Mom wasn't watching, telling us not to let her know until the train had left town.

During strawberry season I would pick berries along the railroad track and sell them to the railway men for thirty-five cents a quart. I thought I was making good

money as these men were only making twenty-five cents an hour from the N.A.R.

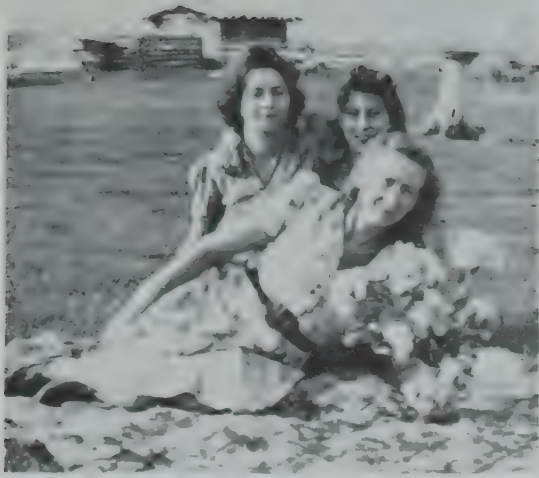
Watino was a busy place, it had two stores, two cafes and a pool hall. I got to like our life at Watino, there was always something exciting going on. There was no ferry across the river at that time, only a railroad bridge. Many a time a man would walk into town and hire a few of us boys for twenty-five cents each, if we would go and rotate planks on that railroad bridge so he could drive his car across the ties. It's a miracle that none of us ever fell off that bridge as there were no railings on the sides.

There were men travelling around with picture shows, usually a cowboy show, and we would get hired for the same job on the bridge, only not for money, but for a fee ticket to the show. Needless to say, our mothers never knew the chances we took on that bridge, but it was money in the pocket for us. I was also lucky to have a job as school janitor, so I was really living high on a wage of about four dollars a month.

Whenever I wanted to visit Dad for a few days or over the weekend, I would go by freight, as in those days there was always a passenger car just ahead of the caboose. I knew the brake and train men really well and they never charged me a cent. I took advantage of that, but no one seemed to mind.

In the summer time, there was always swimming and fishing. We fished with reasonable success even if our fishing rod was only a piece of willow with a string on it. The winter was my favorite season as we could ski down those high hills. It seemed to take forever to reach the bottom! What fun! We had toboggan and sleighing parties at night. A piece of cowhide was a good toboggan except when you went over a protruding rock. Then it was rather hard on your bottom. Some of the children I went to school with at Watino were: Susan and Camille Oulette, Clara and Johnny Cameron, Neil and Eugene Johnson, Mary and Annie Mullins, Jessie Bresenhan, Art Hanson, Barbara, Lola, Richard, Margaret and Roy Pucci. Lloyd, Donald and Keith Morris, Pete, Clyde and Hazel Smith, Katie McCammon, Willie, Frank and Rosie Deluke, Anni, Mary and Steve Krochowsky, Mary Hotra, Helen and Elsie Ferguson, George, Kenneth, Larry and Dora Williams, Edna and Mary Smith. There were also the Alying girls, Alice, Marion and Florence. Now it seems funny how things turn out. Marion married Tuffy Boreen and their daughter Beverly and my daughter, Cynthia attended school at Eaglesham together. Florence married Stan Sather from Wanham and their son, Doug, and my son, Randy attended school together at Wanham. Now my grandson, Damian Fleming and Marion's grandchildren, Ryan and Stacey Wells will be attending the same school at Wanham. Beverly is now Mrs. Gerald Wells.

The move back to the farm was not that difficult although I did miss the kids that were my friends for those three years. Children adjust quickly though, and I looked back on our life at Watino as a sort of dream or a story that left only memories. I made a lot of very close friends, one of whom was Richard Pucci. One beautiful summer day, we had nothing exciting planned, so decided to chew tobacco. Richard's dad chewed tobacco, so it seemed like a good thing to try. We were usually sensible



Mrs. Napoleon Chabot and her daughters Donalda and Theresa on the Chabot homestead.

and never got into any trouble. We didn't even try smoking as a lot of the kids did when they got out of sight of their parents. Richard snatched a plug of tobacco from his dad and we climbed a hill that overlooked the town. We chose this spot as being safe from being spied on and we certainly didn't want to get caught. I had never chewed tobacco before, and didn't realize there was an art to it. Before I knew it, I had swallowed some. I started to get dizzy and my stomach felt just awful. To put it mildly, I don't think you can get much sicker without dying. Well I pulled through the experience, and it was a lesson never forgotten as I haven't taken a chew since.

In 1938, Rahab was to have a new name ... Codesa. One version of how they arrived at the new name was that the first two letters from three names: Cooper, Deacon and Sangster were joined together making CO-DE-SA. These names belonged to three very important men working for the N.A.R. management at that time. They had it changed from Rahab as Rahab was mentioned in the Bible, but not at all a desirable sort of name.

By 1938, more families had moved into Codesa. The Wozniak family moved from Wanham in about 1936, and the Chabot family from Spirit River in 1938. In 1938, Codesa had an elevator built and Albert St. Jean was the first elevator man. He was buying grain for Midland Pacific Grain Company. Things were a little different, then. When you hauled a load of grain in, you received a grain cheque as you do now, only you could cash it at the elevator right then and there. There was a safe cemented in the office floor and that's where the money was kept.

Anyhow that's how Codesa elevator operated. All grain hauled by horses and on many occasions, when we got to the elevator, there would be six or seven farmers from the Little Smokey, an area straight south of Codesa. This elevator was the closest grain delivery point for them. They would tell us how they had to double up with their horses to get their load up and across the Birch Hills. These farmers from the south would travel together most of the time when hauling grain. It was quite a distance with horses, and they never got back to their farmsteads much before eight or nine at night.

There were drastic changes taking place in our community and progress was noticeable. Farmers had more

land cleared and a few roads were being graded with horses and scrapers. All this work was done by local farmers and wages from this work went towards your taxes. I was getting to where I could take a man's place just about anywhere. We had quite a few livestock and hogs as did everyone else around. We had no water supply such as a dug-out, so we had to haul water from three miles away. The Ferguson place had deep wash-outs in their part of the creek and it served as a reservoir. We hauled water with a homemade water tank, resembling a wagon box, only smaller in size. In our area, the younger boys were the lucky ones chosen to haul this water. We dumped the water into a holding well. It took one day's hauling to fill it and would last five to six days. A lot of people would melt snow for their stock, but it was a tedious job, also an all-day consuming one.

Another task that took a lot of work was hauling logs to a sawmill. Some areas were really fortunate in having a sawmill close by, but we had to haul our logs to Warners at Fox Creek, which is south of Eaglesham, a long distance of eighteen miles. Dad would take a load of logs one day and come home with a load of lumber the next. It was just rough lumber, and if you needed a planed board, we would plane it by hand using an "Armstrong planer." Everyone owned one and it was so named because you had to have a strong arm to use it. It was made by the Stanley Tool Company.

While the devastating fires were destroying our timber, it was at the same time opening up territory that would be grabbed up by new settlers. This was how the land three miles to the east of us and towards Eaglesham was settled. Some of the farmers that settled there were from Codesa. They were the Paul Gerards, Joe Thibeaults, Charlie Brochu, Charles Bouchard, and new-comers, Napoleon Chabot and his family, the Gabourys, Burroughs, Blomerts, Linkhards, Otto Koch and the Joe



Joe Thibeault and his sons clearing land on his homestead.

Hoslers. This part of our community was changing so fast, that even though I knew every nook and cranny at one time for miles around, the immense change was too rapid, and I felt lost in the new surroundings.

My last year of school at Codesa was in 1938-39, with a few new faces added since before the Watino move. They were Amy, James, Donalda and Theresa Chabot, Ben, Dominique, Gema and Frank Gaboury, Matt, Merlin and Cecile Wozniak.

That particular term turned out to be the final year of

school for many of us, for at that time, grade eight was as high as they could teach in this school. At the end of that term there were seven of us promoted into grade nine. They were Morris Brochu, Gaspard Bouchard, Harvey Lewis, Matthew Wozniak, Sally Melnyk and myself. We received certificates saying that we graduated with honours from this Northern Academy at the University of Codesa, Province of Alberta. I still remember well the mixed feelings of happiness and sadness that came over me when I realized that I would never be back there again. The thought of facing the world and making up my mind as to what I wanted to do with my life, left me feeling lost and afraid.

Our mode of living was changing for the better. Money seemed more available so we were able to buy things that we couldn't afford before. We were more style-conscious in our way of dressing. A few people even had radios. Radios then were of a battery model. The battery pack would cost seven dollars and would last you six months if you were careful not to leave your radio on too long at a time. In those days it was quite common for people that owned a radio to have a house full of friends in every evening either to listen to the world news, or "Gang Busters," "Mr. District Attorney," or another favorite-the spooky show called "The Shadow Knows."

The first proud owner of a radio in our area was Mike Kievit, and since we didn't have one, Dad said he would go over and listen to the news. I decided to go along since I had nothing more interesting to do and it was only one mile away. Well we were sitting there listening to the news, and mice were peeking at us from every which direction. These mice must have sensed we were strangers because they stayed low for about an hour and then they were all over the place, running across our shoes while we just sat there, not quite believing our eyes. Once in awhile Mike would take his twenty-two rifle and shoot a half dozen or so right inside his dirt-floored shack, laughing all the while. Let me tell you, I never had a desire to hear the world news again. It was shortly after this that I got a job, and the first thing I bought was a radio for my mother.

Our home was never the same after we got the radio. It was surprising what changes came about. Mom had her soap operas and Dad his news and boxing, while I was still interested in Gang Busters and so on.

I was getting to the age where girls were getting good to look at and could be quite interesting as well. It was difficult for us teenagers to get around, for our mode of transportation was still horses, be it with wagon, sleigh or horseback, or else it was on foot. Usually we had it planned that the person farthest away would come half way and leave his team and then we would continue with a fresh team on to wherever the dance or party was being held. When the dance was at Eaglesham, I usually went to Morris Burroughs place and then we would go on to Eaglesham. If the dance was at Belloy, he would come down to our place. We used to go to the Four Mile Creek school dances which were about nine miles south of Eaglesham. There was also the Fox Creek hall and school that held many a merry party. The Fox Creek School is still on its original location, two miles west of Eaglesham corner, but is used as a shed for honey extraction now.

Getting there and back was half the fun of the dance, more than likely, we would sing all the way there and back. Many a time we walked to the Fox Creek Hall, a distance of ten miles. We then danced all night and then had to walk home, arriving about seven in the morning.

There were times when about twelve of us would go to a Belloy dance on horseback. It was a trail ride as well as a dance. The Urness boys had a Model T Ford, but then the road conditions were so bad, it could only be used during the driest time of the year. Many a Sunday, Clarence, Willard, Sanford, Alvin and Mildred would drive down to our place following that Jack Rabbit trail that we called a road. Sometimes they would stop along the way and bring Malcomb and Florence Ferguson along. There would also be young people from our immediate neighborhood at our place and we would have a softball game. Mom would prepare us a meal fit for a king, and after that came our musical evening with violin, guitar, song and dance until three in the morning. We didn't need to have money to enjoy ourselves. One particular time I was in the Model T with Clarence and Sanford. We were driving along this rough old trail when we noticed a wheel pass us. We realized that it was a wheel off the car. It had come off during a real rough spot on the road, and we didn't know the difference until we saw that wheel pass us! The surprise on our faces must have been a story in itself. No harm was done, we stopped and put it on again.

In the fall of 1939, I told my dad that I would help him with most of his harvest and stook most of his crop, then go out and get a job to make some spending money. We didn't have that many acres cultivated, so it didn't take long. As it was both my sister Sally and myself went to work on farms south of Belloy at a community called Peoria. As close as we lived to this community, we hadn't known it existed until then.

I worked for Allan Graham, stooking and Sally worked for Gladys Stauffer. Gladys worked for Wilbur Sterling's crew and her husband also worked on the Sterling crew. This was my first experience at working away from home. When I looked at the acreages that had to be cut and stoked, it seemed to me that there was no way a person could ever finish. Now it seems funny, as what looked big to me then, was actually half a section of land with only about two hundred acres in crop. Erling Borseth was doing the cutting for Allan then. He had four horses hooked to a binder. I managed to keep up to that binder, too and can remember them telling me that I was doing good. But I never knew how much good meant, as I had never worked for anyone before. I was afraid if I didn't extend myself, someone else would get my job. I was fifteen years old, and didn't know any better. Guess I worried needlessly, for I worked there for three harvests and could have picked the people that I wanted to work for.

For anyone not knowing about stooking, you first had to have a strong back, and the condition of your mind didn't really matter. You had to be willing to work endlessly! There was a knack to it though, and once you caught on, you were on your way. The required result was to make the stook stand up good and solid until threshing time.

Leonard Evenson gave me a few fast lessons on how to stook an easier way. That was just before he went into the Army. Arnold, Leonard and Lloyd Evenson and I often worked in the same field, stooking for Stirling. They were all hard working boys. The sun beat down on us and it was so hot that our clothes would be completely soaked. Actually, one didn't have to work to perspire, but work we did!

This one day in particular, about two in the afternoon, the binder that Erling Borseth was driving, went past me and one of the horses reared straight up, then went down. It was dead. We assumed this horse died from a heat stroke, and though this scared me, no one told me to take it a little easier or to take a couple of hours off during the hottest part of the day, and make up for it in the evening. I just continued on as before.

Allan felt sorry for his horses, so he bought a tractor to pull his binder. Let me tell you there were times when I envied those men on the tractor and binder.

After the most of the grain was cut and stooked, we would start threshing. I really don't know which was harder work, pitching bundles or stooking, but definitely threshing was more fun. Especially if there was a good crew.

That first year that I pitched bundles away from home was also for Allan Graham, Wilbur Stirling and Russell Bell, who owned the threshing outfit jointly.



Bert and Helen Larson. Emily stayed with the Larson's and attended Fox Creek school.

It was a big outfit. It took nine bundle racks to keep the machine going. Johnny Peters was the "separator man," and Stirling's Model D. John Deere tractor was used to run the machine. The majority of the men that pitched bundles on a threshing crew would have their threshing done by the same outfit. At that time, some of the crew were: Henry Banman, Morris Griffiths, Tony Kozak, George Wendland, John Dick, Emil Janot, Erling Borseth, Lloyd Evenson and myself. Also John Peters and Allan Graham.

We worked hard, but we had a lot of fun. Lloyd Evenson and I were the youngest on that crew and we always managed to pull some stunt that was uncalled for. For instance, that area of Peoria has deep gullies and ravines criss-crossing every which way, and there were times that we would finish threshing at one place and have to cross an enormous ravine to thresh on the other side. To get there, we would have to follow a road and go

a distance of four to five miles. Lloyd and I would take the short cut, down the ravine, over logs and stumps and up the other side. Nine times out of ten, we would have to repair our bundle racks after we got to the other side. We never did tell anyone and the next time, we more than likely did the same thing. Then we would challenge each other as to who could put on the biggest load of bundles. I would load so high that I couldn't get on top of it. On one occasion, I got the load by the feeder of the thresher and half the load slid into the feeder, and me along with it! It scared the living daylights out of me, but I managed to jump out of the feeder to the opposite side. One of the men mentioned this episode to me not long ago and we laughed about it. It could have turned out differently, though.

The good part about threshing was the nice meals that were served; in most cases, meals out of this world! Then there was lunch and coffee in the forenoon and again in the afternoon. The only thing not so good were the sleeping accommodations. The nights were with frost and I can truthfully say that I slept under some awful conditions, such as in a straw pile or on a hayrack, in the feeder of a threshing machine, in granaries and in barn lofts. During the next couple of years, I went back and worked for Jack Laughland operating a binder with four horses. Bill and Norman Ormiston were in the army by then and Jack, their brother-in-law was looking after their land. I also worked for Eric Sevre's and George Olsen's threshing outfit. Every Saturday after supper most of the crew would go their own way. Some would go home and others would go to Wanham and perhaps spend the evening in the bar, but there was quite a few young people my age in Wanham. We used to get into LeRoy Tansem's car and would all go to Rycroft for pop and to shoot the breeze. Buddy Metz and Lloyd Fowler were at Wanham then too, along with quite a few nice looking girls.

After harvest came Hallowe'en. Hallowe'en of 1939 was one to remember. There were about eight of us and we decided this was the time to do something different. We sat around John and Peter Noga's place until about midnight, planning our escapade. We never did anything destructive but did comical and mischievous things. We thought they were anyway.

We decided to try Rainee Chamberlains place first, but it seemed he was expecting us. He sat himself down in a chair facing the door which was open, with only the screen door closed. That way, he was sure to hear or see anything that moved out front. He had his car parked safely about ten feet away from the door. We sneaked up to his car, tied a rope to the front bumper, threw the car out of gear, and very, very slowly, towed it away right under his nose! Once we got it out of the light of the house, we were away! We left it a mile from his house, undamaged, and he could never figure out just how it was possible that he never heard or say anything.

The other place we went to was Mr. Bihun's place. They had dogs, but since Peter Noga was Mrs. Bihun's brother, he knew the dogs so we sent him ahead to calm them down. Once we got into the yard the dogs accepted us along with Peter. We then worked in peace, taking Mr. Bihun's wagon apart and hauling it, piece by piece into



Mr. and Mrs. Melnyk off on a trip back to Rosthern, Sask.

the hayloft. Once in the hayloft, we put it together again. Then we harnessed all the cows that were in the barn. We worked all night long. We never did anything that couldn't be put right again with a little work.

One evening, a few years later, we were partying at a neighbor's house and John Noga thought that fried chickens would sure taste good. It was decided that the Bogdanek's would be the chickens to sacrifice a life or two. Since John thought of the idea, he was elected to go to the Bogdanek house and visit, acting as a decoy while a couple of others would snitch the chickens. After John was in the house, we went to John's own chicken house and got two of his chickens to fry. Then we laughed ourselves silly, half the night as John kept referring to the neighbor's chicken tasting so good, when he was actually eating his own chicken. Knowing John, he would have laughed about it now, as he was a good sport and after all we were his friends.

After Hallowe'en, came thoughts of a job again and a sawmill was the most likely place we would go. Ben Hauser had built a sawmill and set it up in the bush seven or eight miles south-east of Belloy. At the sawmill he had an edger and planer that was mostly built by himself. He could buy planed lumber for thirty-two dollars per thousand feet. Ben's place was a good place to work at. Most of his crew were from Belloy and Wanham. Ben's mother, Mrs. Hauser, did the cooking while Mary Bassisty, a girl from Prestville helped her. In the summer of 1941, a forest fire went through this part and destroyed most of the timber, but left the mill intact. I had thought the mill miles and miles out in the bush, but actually it was only a mile south of my present home, along highway 49.

At the time, the war was still on and boys of army age were in the forces. The younger and older ones were left to look after farming and to generally carry on with work that had to be done. There were great employment opportunities a few miles to the west, at Dawson Creek. The Alaska Highway was to be built, and Dawson Creek was Mile Zero of this highway. My curiosity was first aroused after seeing convoys of American army trucks heading west on our meagre highway 49 on route to Dawson Creek. At that time, it was so narrow that to vehicles barely had enough room to pass. These convoys were a regular occurrence and stretched in what looked like a

continuous line. If you ever rode the passenger train, you would find them loaded with American soldiers travelling to Dawson Creek and to points north. After seeing all this, I ventured out and had a look for myself.

Dawson Creek was originally a small town with only three cafes and about two stores. Then the army moved in along with labor forces required to build a highway. The town couldn't handle it and overflowed. The army lived in barracks and the labor force in tar paper shacks anywhere and everywhere. There were all sorts of jobs available and men were hired immediately. There were no such thing as hanging around and hoping for a job. The wages went up to \$1.25 per hour.

At that time I worked for Anderson Construction, in the gravel crushing department. Anderson Construction was contracted to build x number of miles on the Alaska Highway. Some of the crew were real roughnecks and it took some getting used to. The majority of the men were city boys from Ontario. I was homesick for the first while as I was never far away from home before.

I next worked for Pat Squires Construction and was involved in remodeling a cafe at Dawson Creek. When this outfit moved to Spirit River, I moved with them. As part of my wages, I got a car from Pat. It was a 1927 Pontiac so I really came home in style, or so I thought at the time. There were no new cars available at that time. You couldn't even buy a new tire, as everything went towards the war effort.

Bringing this car home was something else again. In the first place, I had never driven a car before, but I felt confident and was sure that ten or fifteen minutes at the wheel would make me a driver. I imagine you did require a drivers license but no one actually insisted on you having one. The previous owner explained how to operate the car but neglected to mention that the motor leaked oil past the front and back seal. The spare tire was bolted on to the back of the car. It looked fine, but upon closer inspection, I found no tube and a hole about the size of a fifty cent piece was in the tire. Evidently the jack and wheel wrench were not part of the standard equipment either, because a little later I found out that I had neither. The only thing I did have was a flat tire before I got out of town. One of my friends who worked at a service station, sold me patches and let me use a jack. We fixed the tire and I was on my way home. About ten miles down the road I found the motor making strange noises, just as if it was missing on half the cylinders. Upon checking, I could see why. The spark plugs were getting wet from the water that was spraying on them from the hole in the radiator. Besides this, the fan belt was loose and couldn't be tightened. I tried to start it up again but the starter only groaned and finally died. This must have been a common problem in this model as it came equipped with an "arm strong" starter ... the crank! After talking a nearby farmer into parting with a five gallon can of water I managed to get home, even if it was with somewhat of a deflated ego. I still had some money so about two weeks and one hundred dollars later I did have a reasonably dependable car. The car had wooden spoke wheels and after a few days of hot summer, you could hear them squeal continuously.

I never realized I had so many friends until I got that

car. It changed my lifestyle immensely, increasing my stomping grounds three fold. Wanham, Spirit River, Rycroft became my favorite hang-outs.

Getting parts for this car was a problem, too and I scrounged the countryside looking for someone who had owned the same model. I found out Jim Rutherford's parents had an old Pontiac they weren't using anymore. The Rutherford family were then living on a farm south of Prestville. They had driven from Southern Alberta in this car and upon arriving had retired it. To get to their farm, we used a short cut which involved fording the Burnt River. I took the fan belt off the motor on my car before crossing, otherwise the fan would have hit the water and broken or stalled the motor. The water was high, but we did get across. After giving us a nice lunch the Rutherfords sold me a block and some extra parts for my car.

My favorite garage man was Ralph Pickard at Wanham. he owned the garage which is now known as "Grouchy Bear Den." He gave me more free tips on fixing my car than I would ever begin to learn out of a book. One time I stopped at his place and wanted to know what was wrong with my starter as it only worked sometimes. Ralph took a pair of pliers and tightened one battery post and charged me fifty cents. He said the labour was five cents and the other forty-five cents was for the know-how. I admired this self-taught mechanic and a more sincere and helpful friend you could never wish for.

These few years of hopping from one job to another



Orist's newly acquired girl friend, Marie, and himself in front of his spanking new 1946 Ford pickup.

and the wide open spaces; birds singing and wild flowers at your feet. I think I would even have enjoyed the sound of a crow at that point.

The people I knew in the city could not understand my wanting to return to the country. I wanted to be free; to be part of mother nature and all of her wonders again. A feeling of belonging is what I had in the country, and these city people could not grasp my meaning.

When I got back to the Peace River country I was confident and knew I would make my home here. I bought a quarter of land (kitty-corner to Dad's home place,) from Jack Spital, who was retiring in B.C. I paid the sum of five hundred dollars for this quarter and there was approximately thirty-five acres under cultivation. Not long after, I leased a section of solid bush close by. My carefree style of living came to an end. From that time on it seemed that every penny I could spare went towards the task of clearing my four hundred and forty acres of bush land.

Meanwhile, my brother Steve and my sister, Emily were having quite a time acquiring their education. Even though things in our community looked a little brighter, our closest school was still at Codesa, some five and a half miles away. Steve's school days continued at Codesa until Emily came of school age. My folks then decided to board Steve and Emily out to Kozeluks who lived right next to the school two miles north of Belloy. They stayed at Kozeluks for two school terms. After that, they rode horseback to Codesa School for another two years.

Emily then went to Dawson Creek staying at Sally and Joe Shmyr's place and attended school there for one year. When in grade six, Emily boarded at Bert and Helen Larson's in the Fox Creek District and attending school there for a year. By then I had my first car and used to bring her home every Friday and take her back every Monday. For the next two terms Emily attended Rycroft School staying at a dormitory operated by the Catholic Sisters.

In 1946, Dad bought a lot in Wanham. He built a little house, or you could call it a shack as it was very small. He moved in on to the lot and added a porch to it. Emily



Joe Shmyr and daughter Lorraine at Dawson Creek.

made me no closer to deciding my life's ambition. After some deliberation, I enrolled at a welding school in Edmonton. The way I had it figured, whether I farmed or worked out, welding would always be an asset.

After completing the course, I worked in the city for about four months. This city life was not going over very big with me. It just wasn't my style. I felt trapped. You would go back and forth on the same streets every day, be it to school or work. It put me in the same category as those animals in the zoo pacing back and forth in their cages. I missed the strolls down a country path, just me

lived here and went to Wanham School, completing grades nine and ten.

Our farming community was under constant change. By now there was a graded road to Codesa, and from Codesa south to the main highway. This was not the present Highway 49. This highway jogged one mile to the north at the Belloy intersection; then east for seven miles past Scott's old homestead, then jogged a mile south to the corner where the Fox Creek Church is presently standing.

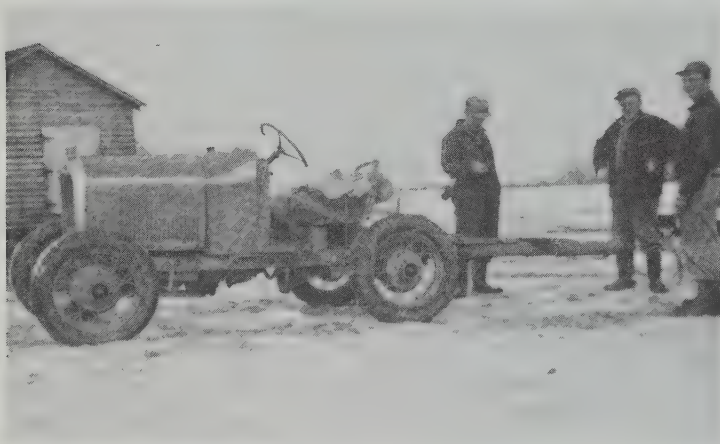
By this time, there was a ferry crossing the Smokey at Watino. Mentioning the crossing at Watino reminds me of an interesting incident.

I was attending a service board conference in Edmonton not too long ago. During the social evening I got into a conversation with Alderman Ledger of Edmonton. He was telling me of his experiences as a tax assessor in the Wanham, Belloy and Spirit River area in 1939. As it was spring break up, they had closed the ice crossing at Watino for two days and no one was allowed across as the water was flowing across the ice a foot deep. Well he was determined that he wasn't going to be stranded up north while his family was in the city. He made a run for it with his old car, and before anyone could stop him, he was out in the middle of the ice. It was sagging and cracking the whole time, but he made it across. When he got to the city, they heard the news on the radio ... "Although the ice crossing at Watino has been closed to all traffic for two days, some idiot drove his car through the barriers and crossed the ice anyhow!"

The ferry across the Smokey opened our community to many people. Now you could cross the river in summer as well as winter.

Quite a few farmers were switching from horses to tractors and a three plow tractor was considered a large tractor. My dad sold his 1926 Fordson tractor for six hundred dollars, and bought a new John Deere model A tractor from Alex Sandercock. I believe he paid \$1795.00 for it. It was on steel wheels. He also bought a new John Deere threshing machine that cost him \$2600.00.

I recall Dad saying to Mom, "Do you know that it took us fifteen years of hard work and misery to get back to where we were before we left Saskatchewan. But it was worth it. If I had to, I'd do it over again."



This hot rod was built by Orist in 1949. It had nine speeds ahead and three in reverse. Left to Right: John and Bill Bogdanek and Steve Melnyk.



*Orist and Marie -
Oct. 17, 1948.*

My mother on the other hand, always talked about their life in Saskatchewan, and as she reminisced, I could detect a sadness in her voice, and her eyes would get that glassy, far-away look. She missed the family and friends they left behind and the social life they used to take part in. Mother used to talk about Saskatchewan quite often.

Finally, one year, both Dad and Mom went back for a visit; the first in fifteen years. Well it seemed that things had changed back there. Friends they used to visit were no longer there. The dirty thirties took their toll in that part of the country; three out of every five farmsteads were deserted. Country schools were boarded up, and school yards that had resounded with cheers and laughter were now silent. Some of the churches they had worshipped in had suffered the same fate. There were just not enough people left. The younger generation had left for Edmonton and Calgary, or other parts of Alberta.

After they came back from their visit, Mom had a different outlook on life. It was as if she accepted this country in earnest for the first time and appeared happier for it. After that she never talked much about Saskatchewan. It became part of a past not so important.

For the past couple of years, my sister, Sally had been working in Dawson Creek. In 1944, she wrote home and told us she was getting married to a man named Joe Shmyr. I was sure I had lost a sister. In 1947, however, Joe and Sally bought land east of Belloy. I had my sister back, and had gained a brother-in-law. They built a house and settled down on their new farm. Joe bought an old McCormick Deering tractor on steel wheels and commenced clearing land, breaking up his half section.

Sally and Joe raised five children: Lorraine, Raymond, Ardie, Earnest, and Connie. Sally and Joe still live on the same farm and Connie is their only child left at home. She is attending school in Wanham.

By this time Justin Sinkevich had bought a Case tractor and was making the rounds custom breaking land all over this area. Justin was always on the move. When he came to town to get the mail, he would jump out of his car and run to the post office, then run back to the car and wave to you on the fly. If you ever stopped at his place during the day, you would immediately notice that he never walked, but was always at a semi-run. Well this is exactly how he drove and operated any equipment; be it car, combine or tractor. Even while breaking land, he would operate in the fastest gear or highest speed possible.

The business of farming got to me and I guess you could say it hooked me. I got to taking it quite seriously. In the spring of 1946, I sowed my first crop by myself. Before this time I had Dad farm it and use it as his own. The part that stands out in my mind is that I sowed twenty-six acres into rye. When harvested it yielded approximately 36 bushels to the acre. For some reason, the price of rye jumped from \$1.80 per bushel to \$4.20 per bushel. That's when I sold my rye. Well let me tell you, that farming looked like a promising career! Everything we needed to buy was priced reasonably then. With my new found fortune, I decided to get a better vehicle. The sticker was you could not go out and just buy a car or truck as it was considered war time and there were limited quantities of new vehicles coming in. You had to have your name on a list for a new vehicles. Lists were sixty to one hundred names long and were in every garage. As it happened, Tom Bergeron had his name at the top of one of these lists but didn't have money at the time. For a nominal fee, I got his turn to the 1946 Ford pick-up. The vehicles at that time came without tires. Luckily, I had a good-hearted neighbor who owned a rubber-tired wagon. He must have felt sorry for me, because he let me use those tires until I got hold of a new set. The day before I got my new truck I drove my old car to Mr. Steve Howard's place, our neighbor to the west.



Orist showing off his firstborn - Cynthia Marie.

The previous year I was working on my dad's threshing crew and we were on Howard's land. I had promised Steve first chance at my car if I ever decided to sell it. When I left that car it was as if I'd just sold my best friend. I felt like a traitor. I forgot about all the grief it had caused me. Several years later, Steve Howard sold this car to Morris Sinkwich.

In 1946, the government decided this area would be a good place to clear large amounts of land then make it available to veterans who were interested in farming. There were three different contractors who took on this massive project. First there was O.B. Lassiter, who brought in thirteen caterpillars. Another was Seviengnie Construction Co. with five Cats. Nick Johnson had two cats and was from Peace River. The Mix Brothers had four cats and cleared land south-east of Codesa.



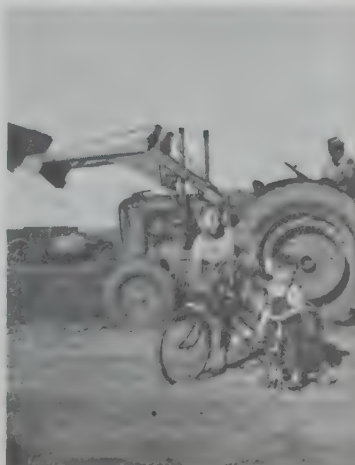
Marie holding Randy - 1958.

As I have previously mentioned, this country was for the most part in bush. In a matter of four or five years, all that was left were wind-strips and roots to be picked. At this time the veterans started coming in and settled on these projects. Our population tripled in one year.

In an area of seven miles, from Belloy road to Codesa road, thirty-six new families settled. I am going to mention only the last names of families in the area that I consider to be our immediate community. They were: the Coopers, Hillabys, Olivers, Suttens, Molenes, Demays, Morrells, Madsens, Bothams, Kozys, Sallis's, Bosses, Moxleys, Kellers, Deterdeniets, Lunns, Cowets, Nuns, Giles, Blois's, Bobiers, McPhersons, Elhorns, McSweenys, Newbys, Hunts, Hobergs, Horns, Berners, Kennedys.

These families pitched in with a lot of enthusiasm and worked hard. They found it hard coping with this new life, especially living in granaries. Some however, managed small houses the first year. No utilities were available. Many of them had willing wives though, and with two pails in each hand, they had running water! Oh, it was hard for these new settlers, but when I think back, they didn't have a fraction of the hardships my folks along with other pioneers had in the thirties. In fact in 1948, I only had one hundred acres cultivated, compared to the three hundred acres that was broken up on each parcel of land on the project. Some of these boys were good farmers. The ones that were not did not last long. Out of thirty-six families, there are only seven families still living on their land at the present time.

Not too long after these families moved in, our community was the recipient of a major road con-

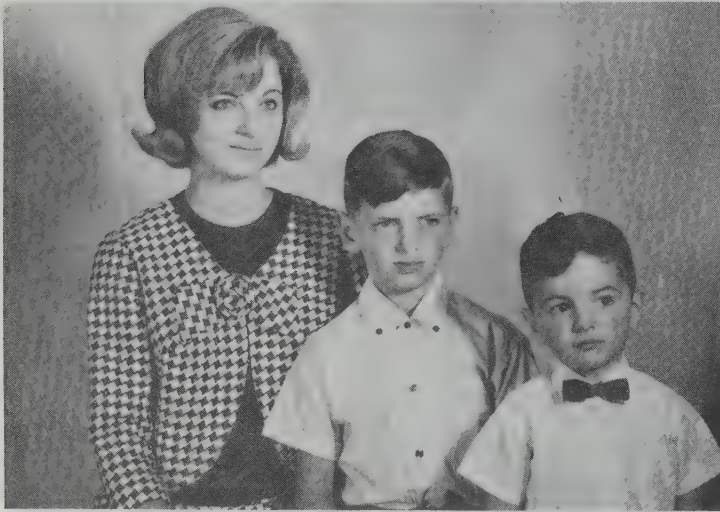


Front end with dozer - extended for piling brush. Built by Orist in 1950, it was one of the first around Codesa. In winter it was the only snow moving device in this area.

struction program. As a result our unbearable road situation greatly improved. Shortly after, we had a few roads gravelled and that was a god send to our community.

While the new settlers were picking roots on their projects, the pioneer settlers were hiring cats to clear more of their bushland, as by then there were a few cats doing custom clearing. In most cases the farmers would burn the piled wind rows; then re-pile and burn them again, breaking the land themselves. This is how I got all my bushland cleared. The old timers who pioneered this country were determined, and didn't shy away from work. On several occasions, my new neighbors told me they would never work as hard as we did clearing our own land. They said welfare was a better choice. I never gave up though, and usually did things for myself.

However, I did mechanize my equipment to a higher standard. In 1951, I built a front end loader to fit my DC4 Case tractor, and later built a bulldozer blade for it with extensions allowing me to convert the bulldozer blade into a piler. Then I bought an old Allis Chalmers tractor and rebuilt the steel wheels of it to fit my Case. I



The Orist Melnyk Family - Cynthia, Randy and Loren Gregory.

next bought a Char-Lyn hydraulic pump and set my tractor up so I could take the manual labour out of clearing land. That same summer, I piled a hundred acres with this set-up. It really worked well. I still use this tractor today dozing dirt and snow ploughing.

During this period of time, I did a lot of custom welding. I had the only mobile welding unit in our surrounding area. It was only a tractor-driven unit but it worked very well. During the winter months, we used to have our hands full keeping the roads clear. There were no school buses running, so the Department of Highways did not have to plow the roads. Our roads were never ploughed during the entire winter, that is, unless we ploughed them ourselves. We would spend half of our time plowing the roads as it was nine miles to the main highway. Once we cleared the nine miles of road, it was time to start again, as it drifted in. My brother Steve, and I decided we needed a snow blower, so we made one. We took the straw blower out of the old Case thresher and



The Melnyk home - 1971.

made this blower for pulling behind the tractor. It was a good outfit as long as the tractor could get through the snow.

Most of my winter months were spent working out at sawmills. I worked for the Parks in Spirit River, the Emmersons, south of Codesa, and the Hausers south of Belloy. During the early fifties we bought our own sawmill. It wasn't in very good condition, though. In fact, the whole feed part was missing. From experience I had learned a lot about it's operation and in a couple of weeks had it remodelled and in good working order. Most of our logging was done north of where we originally settled. We sawed lumber for three winters, quitting when we ran out of logs. Actually, it got too far to haul the logs. We used to haul logs on a sloop behind a tractor, and with horses also. At our place we never had a dull moment. Even during the hard winters, we were always up to something.



The Melnyk family was presented with an "Alberta Farm Family" award in 1973. Presentation was made by Lieut. Gov. Grant MacEwan.

As the roads improved, the old modes of transportation were being left behind. Cars and trucks were coming into the surrounding community at a rate you could hardly keep up to. Most of the vehicles were second hand, but the majority of the people were versatile and knew how to fix them. The ones that didn't know, picked up quickly.

In 1947, my dad bought a 1941 Mercury car for

\$1600.00. We considered him quite fortunate as it was a big car and in excellent shape. After the purchase of this car my folks did a lot of travelling. Up to this point they had depended on my truck whenever it was not in use. I never minded them using my truck, but the fact of the matter was that I was courting one particular girl from Rycroft. Later this girl called Marie, got a job at Fimrite's Store in Wanham. We were getting quite serious, and you know how it is! It seemed that I was spending more time in Wanham than on the farm.

In the spring of 1948, I started building a house on my farm. Marie and I called this five room house our dream home, but not by today's standards. It wasn't that bad though, considering I had never built a house before. It had a cement basement and foundation. In fact, we are still living in this house today, some thirty years later. We just added on and re-modelled.



Wedding of Cynthia and Dale Fleming - 1971.

I managed to catch Marie in one of her weak moments, and she agreed to marry me. On October 17, 1948, Marie Smakula became my wife. Our wedding reception was held at Mom and Dad's with several outside guests attending. The first night of our honeymoon was to be spent in our new house. We had no sooner arrived when Steve and a friend of his were at our door. Apparently Mom and Dad's house was filled to capacity and they wanted to know if they could spend the night on our couch. Those two boys giggled the rest of the night while Marie and I behaved like perfect angels. We didn't have much choice as the doors were not yet hung separating the rooms. Marie and I decided right then that if we had to do it over again, we would elope. After that disastrous first night, we continued to live out our honeymoon years on the farm. The money that would have been spent on hotels etc. was spent on the house and buying furniture.

Different people have a knack for doing different things. Marie kept up with the latest fashions and did her own sewing. She was also interested in landscaping and loved to interior decorate. When she got through decorating her kitchen, it looked like a picture from a



Damian Dale Fleming.

fashionable magazine.

At that time, emphasis was on visiting your friends and neighbors and going out for leisurely drives in the evenings. You weren't obsessed with the almighty dollar and took time to enjoy life. If you had a few dollars, fine. If not, you still had a good time. Now everyone's in a hurry and making money takes priority.

We had our share of problems and some looked monstrous to us. I remember my final payment on a two-plow VA Case tractor, (a total of \$345.00) was overdue by two weeks. The banker drove in to repossess it. I told him that at the moment I didn't have a dollar to my name, but didn't owe anybody else a cent. I told him the keys were in the tractor so he could take it. He changed his mind though, and must have decided I wasn't so bad of a risk after all. This was a big problem at the time and I told myself if I could get out of this jam, I would never borrow money again. On one particular Saturday, Marie and I decided we were going to take in a show at Wanham. First I had to stop at the Codesa post office and pick up a five dollar cheque I was expecting. When we got the mail, there was no cheque. We spent the thirty-five cents we had between us and starvation on ham. We went home and made a couple of ham sandwiches and laughed about it.

The summer of 1950, was a sad one for our family. Grandfather, the man I admired and who was my idol, suffered a stroke. He was ninety-three years old, and did not recover.

There are times when life seems against you, but then strikes another blow, making you wonder where it is going to end. My mother became ill shortly after. After a few visits to the specialist in Edmonton, she went to Toronto. In 1952 she was operated on, but never recovered. My mother died at forty-nine years of age.

After her passing, things around Dad's farm were never the same. My sister, Emily, was working at the Royal Bank in Spirit River. My brother Steve, was playing the field and was not around home too often. Dad was very lonesome. He seemed to have lost all will to carry on.

In 1951, Marie and I were blessed with our first child, a baby girl. We named her Cynthia Marie.

My sister Emily, after working in Spirit River for a couple of years met and fell in love with a boy who was

stationed at Spirit River with the R.C.M.P. detachment. They were married in 1954. Emily was now Mrs. Dave Beiersdorfer.



Emily and Dave Beiersdorfer - 1954.

Dave and Emily have lived a hectic sort of life. Just about the time they were settled in one place, Dave would get a transfer with a promotion. They had four children: Debby, Sandy, Bob and Bill, and are presently living in Ottawa. Dave is now Deputy Commissioner. (Admin)

My brother Steve, was still playing the field and I wondered when it would end. I was beginning to think he would never settle down. He finally decided to go to S.A.I.T. in Calgary and become a full fledged carpenter. It seemed there was big money in construction, just awaiting to be taken. Carpentry couldn't have been the most interesting subject there was, as Steve found himself a steady girlfriend. Steve gave up his money-making scheme of constructing houses and got married in 1958. He started a more interesting occupation; constructing a family. Bertha and Steve lived on Dad's farm for about ten years after they were married. Steve then built a home in Grande Prairie, sold all of his land, and is presently in the trucking business. Bertha is working in the Grande Prairie Hospital. They raised four children: Diana,



Bertha and Steve Melnyk - 1958.

Bobby, Ricky and Don.

Dad also sold his land shortly after and bought himself a house in Grande Prairie. A few years later he also bought a cottage at Sturgeon Lake. Dad suffered a stroke in December of 1977, and has been in an Edmonton Hospital since that time.

The year of 1958, saw Marie and I with another addition to our family. This time a boy was born and we named him Randy Orist Jack. I was really proud of myself. Marie had a helper, and now I had a farmer.

By this time our community had changed drastically. Even though I lived and saw the changes it was still hard to believe. However, the roads were still bad. They were gravelled, but when our annual monsoons hit, they got to a very muddy state. You couldn't get to the pavement with a vehicle. The children would have to miss school as the busses couldn't run.

In 1964, we added another member to our family. A boy was born ... a curly-haired dark-eyed little playmate for us all. We called him Loren Gregory.

At this time there was talk of further centralization of schools. The school division was going to build that big



The Beiersdorfer Children - Debbie, Sandy, Bob and Bill.

white elephant at Spirit River. If it went through, our children would have to travel some thirty-five miles to school. Marie and I decided right then that we had enough of living out there and would buy land close to the pavement. We would move to it or get into another profession.

I bought a half section of land from Bob Newby and started to plan the move of our buildings. During the next couple of years, I spent all my spare time landscaping our new building site. The location I chose had several huge spruce trees around but was in an awful low spot. I knew I wanted those trees in our yard so I spent endless days hauling dirt to build up the ground level.

In 1969, I hired a man from Woking to move my buildings, the house included. I never believed this house could be moved, but there it was on wheels, about four feet off the ground. Then it started to rain, and would you believe the rain never quit for two weeks. The wheels under the house sank in the mud, and before going to bed



The Steve Melnyk Children. Left to Right: Ricky, Bob holding Donald and Diana.

at night, we would have to block up the bed to make it level. Otherwise you ended up on the floor.

I have been working on my house ever since, exactly ten years, trying to put it back into the same shape it was before the move. I'm still not finished.

A PLEASANT CAPSTONE ON FORTY YEARS OF TOIL AND TEARS

Our spirits and pride were given a boost in 1973 when our family won the Farm Family Award for the Central Peace area. It made all the hard work seem a little more worth while.

Time sure flies by! Our little daughter Cynthia, graduated from Eaglesham High and took a secretarial course at the Fairview College. Upon graduating, she worked in Peace River for a year. In 1971, she married Dale Fleming, who was Athletic and Recreation Director at the Fairview College. They are now in the store business and live in Wanham. They have one son. Damian Dale, who is four years old.

My little farmer, Randy, graduated from Wanham High, then took a mechanics course at Fairview College. After graduating, he served his apprenticeship working in a garage. He is now working where the money is good and is trying to decide what to make of his life.

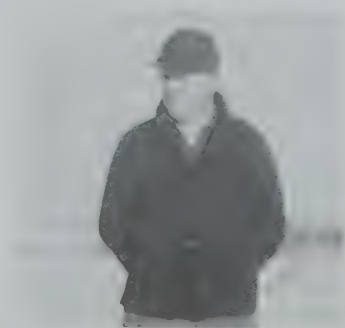
Loren is still attending school in Wanham, presently in grade nine. I could still have a farmer yet!

My dad passed away on February 26th, 1979, one day short of his 79th birthday.

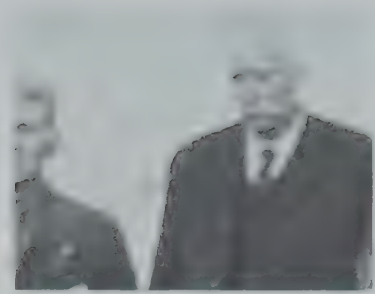
Our present location is ten miles east of Wanham along Highway 49, at the Whispering Pines farm.



Pete Nelson



Bert Moss



ROBERT CELIUS HENDERSON

by Stan Sawers

Robert Celi Henderson was born in Scotland in 1863. He came to Alberta around 1925. He purchased a quarter of land near Wanham which was formally owned by a French-Canadian by the name of Cyr.

Robert's wife Sarah passed away in August, 1940.

Robert passed away in 1947.



Jack Martin and children. Wife Joan in inset. Jack worked for E.J. Harrington.



Nels Jacobsen with Carlo in front of their restaurant.

Martha King (Bramlet).



THE METHENY FAMILY

by Dorothy Speed

In Green Island, Iowa, to George and Sarah Metheny in 1870, was born a son, Eli; 11 years later was born another son, William, on August 18, 1881; and 11 years after that was born the third son, Clifford Raymond, on November 28, 1892. The father, George, was a barrel maker and with them lived his mother, Margaret Metheny, matriarch of the family. With her passing in 1909 the family, (George, Sarah, Eli (Ki), Bill, and Ray), moved to South Dakota for about one year and then in the winter of 1911 to Chinook, Alberta.

FATE

Their mode of transportation was a Chalmers car and near Wiste, Alberta, a spring broke. They stopped at the farm of an immigrant German blacksmith for aid, little knowing that 17 years later Ray was to marry one of the small girls playing in the yard. The Metheny family settled near Chinook. On a horse buying trip with Frank Simpson to the same blacksmith's farm, Ray had another glimpse of his future wife, but didn't recognize her.

In December of 1917, George passed away followed by Sarah eight days later from shock. In 1920, the Metheny brothers moved to the Cluny area, homesteading land and working at land-clearing and threshing with steam engines for Livingstone farms, later known as the Western Sheep and Stock Ranching Company. It was while operating the large steam equipment of this company, that Ray gained his third class steam engineer's license.



William Metheny, age 23, 1904.

During the harvest of 1927, Ray met Emma Bohnke while working at the same farm. On February 6, 1928, they were married in Calgary and made their first home near Cluny. Dorothy was born April 5, 1929, during a southern Alberta spring blizzard, on the train between Cluny and Bassano, becoming the youngest person known in the area to hold up a train. The family moved to Okotoks, and Ray worked as a steam engineer threshing for the same large farm company, and in November Emma and infant Dorothy came north to the West Vale area, with her brother and stayed with her parents. In January, 1931, after the harvest was done, Ray followed and worked for George and Dan Reiswig's sawmills. In February, 1931, a son William (Bill) was born.

In the fall of 1931, Ki came north, bringing with him a

'settler's effects car', a railroad car filled with horses and farm machinery. He and Emma filed on homesteads south of Kadot Lake, kitty-corner from each other. With spring, Ki and Ray built a sod-roofed log house on Emma's quarter overlooking Kadot Lake. They lived there until the following summer, when they moved to Ki's quarter, southeast. Bill came north in 1933 and filed on the quarter west of Ki's, giving the family three quarters of the land in a block.

In December, 1934, Ki succumbed to cancer. Ray and Bill set up a farm machinery repair shop at the farm, with the welding and blacksmith equipment Ki had brought up from Cluny. Emil Bohnke, Emma's brother, had moved in and became an established member of the family, filing on the quarter north of Emma's adjoining Kadot Lake.



Ray and Emma (Bohnke) Metheny, 1928.

Large stands of timber isolated the West area from the nearest railway station, Woking. With the combined efforts of the settlers along the route, the road was completed through to Woking in the summer of 1934. A forest fire had burned over the area in 1931, but much of the timber was salvageable. The two remaining Metheny brothers and Bohnke brothers decided there must be lumber in "them thar" hills, especially since they kept running into the trees, and they decided to pool their resources and build a sawmill. This mill operated by custom labour quite successfully, until timber and mill were destroyed by a forest fire which burned from Webster to the Bad Heart in the early 1940s.

On American Thanksgiving, which the family still celebrated, October 14, 1937, Bill died from a heart attack. His passing was mourned by the entire community, and his kindness and compassion are remembered by all who knew him.

In 1938, the stork which was expected on St. Patrick's Day arrived early, on March 9 and delivered Ray and Emma's last child, Patricia, to the farm. With the war, Emil left the Metheny home, and Ray and Emma farmed alone until 1944. They then joined the Community Farm, moving their house to the Birdsall homesite two miles east. Two years later they returned to the home farm and, after a series of crop failures, they began working out at a

succession of jobs - Emma operating the restaurant in Wanham one winter and cooking at bush camps, and Ray as steam engineer in bush camps and at the hospital at Grande Prairie. With the spring, they would return to the farm to put in the crop. This continued until 1950 when they settled in Nordegg. Ray worked as a steam engineer with the Brazeau Collieries, until the lack of orders for coal forced the closing of the mine in 1954. Then he obtained employment with the Grande Prairie Lumber Company at Grande Prairie. In the meantime Emma purchased land at Rutland, B.C. and commenced building a home. With the home at Rutland underway, Emma rejoined Ray at Grande Prairie, and in 1959 their one-year-old granddaughter, Karen, came to live with them.

When the steam power plant at Grande Prairie Lumber Company's mill burned, Ray, Emma and Karen retired to the home at Rutland. Ray passed away on September 26, 1975, as a result of complications following a stroke, at the age of 82. Emma remarried Paul Ivans in September 1977, and resides at Glenmore near Rutland.

Dorothy, the eldest daughter, married Roy Speed in May, 1949, and they raised four children; Ronald, Jacquelyn, Eugene, and Reginald, and all reside at Grande Prairie.

Bill and Helen have two children, Clifford and Joanne, and reside at Hinton. Bill is employed as electrical superintendent for Cardinal River Coal at Luscar.

Patricia married Ken Callies in 1956. They have five daughters; Dawn, Louise, Kelly, Pamela, and Colleen, and reside on their farm four miles west of Pat's birthplace.

Karen married Dennis Kenakin of Rutland in September, 1977, and they purchased and reside in the Metheny home there.

METZ, LEONARD

submitted by Catherine Bohnke

My mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Metz, were married in Hardisty in 1919, and moved to Kleskun Lake. My grandparents emigrated from Kansas, U.S.A. to a homestead north of Wanham. In the summer of 1934 we, (the Leonard Metz family), also moved to Wanham.

BEER BOTTLE FOR BABY

It was just like a holiday. We travelled in a covered wagon, with a cow following behind. The reason for the cow was that my sister Alice was still on the bottle, as she was only one year old. After about three days on the road, Alice dropped her bottle and it hit the wagon wheel and broke. My father found an empty beer bottle along the roadside and it worked beautifully as a replacement.

That is about the only thing I can remember about the move, except that when we got to Wanham, the weather was very wet. The roads on the other side of the track were terrible. It took us one whole day to go three miles. We moved into a log shack, beside my grandparents.

We never really noticed the depression as far as food was concerned, as we had lots of meat, vegetables, milk,

cream, etc. This was all kept in a root cellar. Our clothes were something else, but being kids this didn't worry us too much, at the time.

BALDY?

I was eight before I started school. The reason for this was that one day my mother told Dad to take me (Catherine) outside and cut my hair off. Literally, that is what he did! He shaved me bald-headed. Needless to say, I never went anywhere till it grew out.

My father owned a steam engine, threshing machine and saw mill. This is how he made his living, so we moved a lot. We didn't move very far at a time, but it seemed miles and miles to me. While we were still north of Wanham, my grandfather, John Metz, got lost about three miles from home. This was in the winter time and it was three days before he was found. My father fired up the steamer and blew the whistle for an hour or so, and people from town and neighbors came and helped in the search.

My uncle, Reuben Metz, had an old car and we would travel to Grande Prairie at Christmas time. Of course there was no such luxury as heaters, so my mother would heat rocks and wrap them in feather blankets so our feet, if nothing else were warm. It would take us 12 hours to make the trip, but it was worth it because when we got to my aunt's, (Mrs. Mike Durda) she would have the most wonderful meal ready for us. We would stay for a few days, then start the long trip back.

BUSH FIRE DISASTERS

Between the ages of twelve and fourteen, I saw three bush fires. The only thing we ever saved was ourselves, my mother's pictures, and a small child's rocking chair which had been brought from Chicago before I was born. It belonged to my mother when she was five years old. The chair is now in my son's house.

The first bush fire I remember, was when I was eleven years old. We were at school when we saw the smoke, and someone said it was at my father's sawmill and we couldn't go home. Well, that was the wrong thing to say to me! I grabbed my brother Milton's hand and we just ran! We got as far as my uncle's place, (Bob Metz) and my family was all there, including the pictures and the rocking chair!

There were four kids in our family and four in my uncle's family. We were put down in an empty well and we had to stay there for three days and two nights. It sure isn't something I'd like to repeat. I have been afraid of the dark ever since. We had lost all of our belongings, but we were together as a family.

GOOD TIMES

We didn't have much in the way of entertainment. Our family was quite musical, so there was singing and dancing whenever we felt like it. On Saturday nights we would have a get-together either at our place or at my uncle's. There would be anywhere from ten to twenty people there. The four of us learned to dance long before

we went to school. I even learned to call square dances at the age of ten.

In the long winter nights we would play cards or my mother would read to us from her big family Bible. Sometimes we didn't have coal oil for the lamps, so my mother would open the front door of the cookstove and would sing to us. She had a lovely soft voice and while she sang we would watch the dancing flames and dream or pretend. We had great imaginations.

FAIR EXCHANGE

In the town of Wanham there was a show hall which had a movie every week. We never had money for such a luxury, so on Saturday mornings I would pick strawberries and sell them to very kind ladies in town. They would give me twenty-five cents a quart, which was enough for the show and a treat.

BROTHER IS BORN WHILE FATHER IS "OUT"

The night my youngest brother was born, it was bitterly cold and my older brother and I had to walk two miles to stay with our grandmother, as it just wasn't proper to stay in the house while a birth was taking place. This was in 1936, and my father had a midwife out to attend at this great event. Father's job was to give the ether to my mother, but somehow he got it instead. When he woke up, it was all over. My brother and I came home the next day to find a new baby brother, not knowing how he got there; very confusing at the time!

Life went on and we moved from place to place. When I was fourteen-fifteen, I would go with Susan to help cook for threshers. That was fun. Of course it was hard work. Sometimes I would drive a bundle team and pitch bundles.

I remember at one mill site southwest of Wanham it was my job, when I got home from school, to operate the steam engine. One day a man and his sixteen year old son came to buy lumber. It was winter time and he threw snow on me, and as I had access to a tank of water, I threw water on him. It got to the point where I had to shut the engine off, then we really got at it. The poor boy was soaked and he had to drive fourteen miles home. He could have died from pneumonia!

We stayed at this place until spring. We went to school at Royal Winner, then we went back to Wanham.

I met my husband-to-be in the fall of 1945 and we were married in February, 1946. The morning of the big day, it was 45 below and we had to walk half a mile to where the car was parked. It was on the other side of the railroad, and wouldn't you know it, there was a freight train and we had to wait fifteen minutes for it to go. It got rather chilly standing there in a long dress. I had put on a pair of woollies and took them off at the church. Reverend Hutchinson performed the marriage ceremony.

The next day we bought groceries from Mr. Blonski, loaded all my belongings, and drove to my new home, which was fourteen miles south and west of Wanham. There I stayed until April. You just didn't get to town whenever you felt like it. Five years later I started a

family, one boy and two girls. From then on, things got better. The snow plow came to the district, roads got better. Life gradually changed as we got bigger and better equipment. Life got more hectic. The telephone came, and T.V.. The old quiet life was gone - no more did we sit up at night putting jigsaw puzzles together or reading by the old coal oil lamp. I was very sorry to see those days go. At that time life was peaceful, you got to know your family, friends and neighbors. But life must go on. We must go along with the tide. They call it progress, I call it mass confusion!

HENRIETTA MILLAR

Hi everyone! I am a native Albertan, born at Blackfalds, Alberta in 1915. I was educated in a rural school and completed my high school in Lacombe. My teacher training was received at the Calgary Normal School in 1933-34.

In the fall of 1934, I journeyed by train to Wanham where my cousin's husband met me and took me to their home until that evening. Then I was driven to my boarding place, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Funk.

The next morning, it was off to school to meet my new pupils. In later years, I have wondered if those children had any idea of how nervous and scared their new teacher was. Somehow we made out and continued to do so for the next three years.

My memories of my teaching experiences at West Vale are good ones. Some of those children are now counted among my friends.

In those days, the school was the centre of the community. The Christmas concert was always a big event, and required many hours of practice. Also there were the whist drives and dances. People came from miles around. Visiting the old school building in later years, I marvelled that so many people could crowd into that small room and still find room to dance.

DANCING 'TILL DAYLIGHT

A dance and box social was another social event. I remember one time when we went to Heart Valley. The dance had to go on 'till daylight so that the men could see to drive the horses through the Kadot. This would have been in the spring of the year, when the creek was flowing fast and the road was broken by water channels.

Life was simpler then, too. I remember another time when a group of us went to a couple's home to help them celebrate their anniversary. There were few musical instruments in the community, but soon there was someone playing a comb and another keeping time on some pie plates. These, added to the violin player, gave us our dance music for the evening.

Three years later, I moved to the Steele District where the school was situated just south of Belloy. This was 1937, and salaries had improved quite a bit. That first year at West Vale, I had just enough money to take me home for Christmas.

At Steele, I boarded with the Babb family, who lived



West Vale Pupils, June 30, 1936.

about a mile from the school. Steele School was a well-built frame building, whereas West Vale was a log building chinked with moss. Steele also had a Waterbury Furnace, but West Vale had the drum-shaped stove. It was at Steele that I had my first experience at organizing a track meet.

While I was at Steele, I decided that I needed a car so that I could visit my cousins south of Wanham. So that fall when I went to a Convention in Grande Prairie, I set out to buy a car. Unfortunately my purchase was not a wise one, and as my knowledge of cars was limited, I soon rued the day I had made the purchase.

The following summer, my father helped me trade this car for a Model-A coupe. It was a very good car, and I understand that someone in the Grande Prairie area now is the proud owner of this same car.

In the spring of 1939, my parents had sold their farm, so I resigned from the Steele School and intended to follow my parents to B.C. However, due to my mother's ill health, they were back in the Blackfalds area by the end of June and settling on another farm.

I returned to teaching in January, 1940, and except for a few years when I worked as a bookkeeper, I stayed with the teaching profession. The last 22 years of my teaching career were spent at Mynarski Park, C.F.B., Penhold. For many years I taught grade three, then accepted the vice-principalship, and taught grade six. I retired in 1976, after having taught for 37 years and six months.

During my teaching years, I enjoyed curling and square dancing as relaxation. Also, many winter evenings and summer holiday months were spent studying for my Bachelor of Education degree.

I now live at Blackfalds in the house I had built in 1961. I am enjoying retirement. I do a fair amount of travelling, and am involved in community and church work, and find some time for reading and handiwork.

FRANK MITCHELL AND SCOTTY McWHIRTER ALSO BILL AND SHIRLEY MITCHELL

by Sam Parlee

Frank Ford Mitchell was born in 1892 in Stephen

Township, Ontario. He attended the Exeter School at Centralia. After completing public school, he took a correspondence course on steam traction engines. He also attended school in Detroit, where he took training as a machinist.

Frank joined the army and in 1917 he went overseas. The war, by that time, was fast coming to a close and he did not get into active service.

When the war was over, he returned to Canada with a determination to go out west to locate a farm. When he reached Edmonton, he found that many returned men were preparing to go to the Peace River District. It was early in April that Scotty McWhirter and Frank laid their plans to take the train to Grizzly Bear, which later became Belloy. They walked out to what is now the Peoria District, where they met Bob Starratt, who had squatted on his place before the land had been surveyed or the coming of the railroad.

The two men crossed the Kakut into what is known as the Heart Valley District. Together they walked the cutlines, in order to discover the corner stakes of the land on which they intended to file. Their choice of land was centered on the east half of 15 and the west half of 14. They tossed a coin in order to determine who would get which. As it turned out Frank's half section was to be the west half of 14-76-3W-6th with Scotty taking the east half of 15-76-3-6th. Though the snow was very deep, they made their way back by following a cutline along the north of section 14 where they crossed the creek, the way they had come. They spent the night at Bob's, then took the train from Grizzly Bear to Spirit River, where they filed on their land.

Sharing a railway car, Frank and Scotty loaded it with settler's effects at Kindersly, Sask. Each man had bought himself a team of horses which were so essential for such a venture. Frank's powerful team of grey Percherons and Scotty's team of bays were coupled up for making it through the wet bush trails, and the steep banks of the Kakut hills. They took a winding wooded trail to the southwest from Grizzly Bear over the Birch Hills to Starratts' Homestead. From there they set off for their holdings, having to rough-lock going down the banks of the Kakut Creek, and doubling up again in order to make the other side.

He spent his declining years in semi-retirement on the farm. He loved to work in the garden, trimming the hedge and pruning the trees. He also assisted with the tractor and combine in the busy seasons. He passed away on November 12th 1971, and was buried in the Heart Valley cemetery. Christina lived alone in the big house on the farm, until her death on the 16th of September, 1979. She was placed beside her beloved Frank.

Bill married Shirley Riddle, from Ontario, on June 23rd, 1973. They have taken over the home farm. Bill is no stranger to this kind of operation, as he helped his dad from the time of his childhood, gradually assuming full responsibility.

When the community had an active farm organization, Bill took part for a number of years. He served as president of the Heart Valley F.U.A. Local 123 and also as secretary at other times. He was often sent as a delegate to the annual conventions in Grande Prairie and

on one occasion to Edmonton.

They came up on the east of section 24. The place where they crossed the creek was known to all the early settlers and was marked by a patch of wild raspberries.

They spent the first night in the wagon box, were awakened by rain, and had to lift the box off of the wagon and turn it upside down. They crawled under the box for shelter with the rain continuing into the next day. The house that they built on Frank's place of rough lumber and slabs is still standing, though it was moved a few rods from its original site. A modern home now stands in place of the old one.

Frank broke the first sixteen acres with his team and walking plough, which cut a 14 inch furrow. The piece was open, with very little willow or poplar to interfere with the process.

In the fall he went back to Kindersly to help his brother with the harvest, and returned in the spring to sow his crop by broadcasting the seed by hand. After the seed was scattered he went over the land with the disk harrow, in order to cover the seed.

In 1922 Christina Webster came to Canada from her native Scotland. She found employment at Bert Mitchell's, where Frank met her. Christina went from there to Toronto, where she worked for the Sunlight Bulb Company until 1925. She returned after a trip back to Aberdeen and found employment in Edmonton, where the friendship was renewed with Frank. They were married February 2nd, 1926.

On December 28th 1926 Wm. James was born.

On May 15th, 1930 Hugh Frank was born.

In 1933 Christina, now Mrs. Duhamel of Edmonton, was born.

Eva was born in 1934.

HEART VALLEY SETTLERS TAKE TO THE SPIRIT RIVER TRAIL

In the early twenties, the homesteaders hauled their grain to Spirit River on what was known as the Spirit River Trail. It went through what is now the West Vale District from where Jack Gulick lives. The trail passed the south side of Kakut Lake and out to the Burnt River at Veercant's, where the river was forded - thus on to Spirit. This was a better trail than the one to Grizzly Bear, remaining in use for many years, and ultimately had a steel bridge, built by the government at Veercant's crossing.

Frank carried on a successful farming operation. He had a decided advantage of being able to do his own repairing and blacksmith work. He sharpened his shares and welded heavy plow axles with aid of the forge, anvil and hammer.

IF SCOTTY'S HOUSE COULD TALK

Scotty lived alone throughout his entire farming career. He operated a threshing outfit in the early days and was one of the first men in the district to turn completely to power equipment.

He underwent an operation for tumor on the brain and died in an Edmonton Hospital. He was buried in the

Heart Valley cemetery.

High at the end of a beautiful slope stands an old yet magnificent house, silent now, unable to tell us of a pleasant courageous pioneer who once lived inside those walls.

OUR LASSITER DISTRICT EXPERIENCE

by Robert, Hazel Morgan and Family

I was granted a half section of land in this area, as I was one of the war veterans. We came to Wanham March 25, 1949.

I remember our Anglican minister, Rev. Davis, who held church once a month. He baptized fifteen children in one service.

We enjoyed picnics at Burnt River Bridge. It was a real blessing to have this bridge opened in 1951 for transportation purposes. Box socials, ball games, potato races ... Dot Crocker and Sophie Bosomsworth were the best runners.

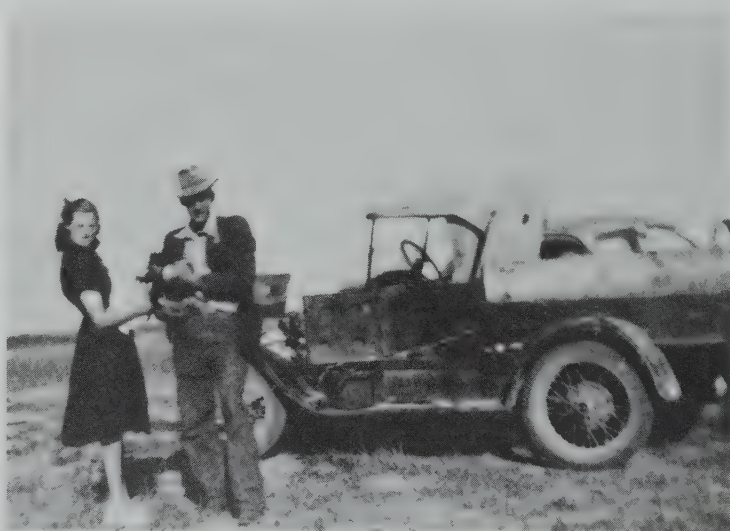
PROJECT BABY

Our first son was born June 24, 1949. Everyone called him the 'Project Baby', as he was the first baby born in this district.

Winters were cold and bitter with wind, sometimes going to 60° below. I remember hauling wood in for seven dollars a load. A neighbour, Myron Crocker was with me once, and while heading back it was so cold we had to stop to light a fire so the horses' noses wouldn't freeze.

All the neighbours would share food, machinery or anything they had. It was a necessity. Our first home was an 8 by 16 bunkhouse. Christmas Dinner was prairie chicken; all the meat was hunted.

My wife and I have fond memories of our neighbours, they were all so good. I'll always say, "If the land would have been as good as the neighbours we would have all been millionaires today."



Robert and Hazel Morgan.

CHARLIE MORRIS

by Florence

Both my mother and dad came from Newfoundland; my dad from St. Johns, and my mother from a small village out of St. Johns. They grew up together, although they were in their 40's when they finally married and went farming. My dad had travelled quite a bit as a merchant seaman, and my mother was a graduate of Montreal General Hospital School of Nursing. She had nursed for 14 years in Montreal and in New York. Her nurses' training came in very handy in the homesteading days. She attended many births and treated any accidents that asked for her help.

My dad was overseas in the first world war, in the Railroad Troops, which was an engineering regiment at that time. When the war was over, he came back to Vancouver and worked on the coastal freighters and tug boats, before going to the Peace River. In 1925, he went to the Peace River and worked for George MacDonald in Wanham, and in 1927 he homesteaded in Peoria. We lived there until 1943, when we moved back to Vancouver. The farm was sold to Mr. Lang. Our stay in the Peace River was not too eventful. Looking back I think the farm is a marvelous place to grow up on. It gives a person a good heritage. I might mention that my mother was post mistress in Peoria for a number of years. Mother was also interested in education in the district and, at one time, was secretary-treasurer for the Mersey School Board. After coming to the coast my mother died, in 1955. My dad is now 85 and still active. He has a full time job and lives by himself, so you can see he is 'smart' for his age.

MORTENSEN, HANS

by Ella (Olson) Peddy

It was in the year 1914 that Hans first ventured into the Peace River country. Before that, he had worked as a carpenter for twelve years in New York, but had tired of the inside work, and decided on a change. He had always wanted to farm, so wrote to Ottawa about land prospects. In return, he received endless brochures about this great land, some of them greatly exaggerated.

He decided to head for Alberta, and was accompanied by Cornelius Olson on his trek north. They took the train to Edmonton, got on a construction train to Sawridge, and from there to Grouard by boat. Here they bought a team of horses and a wagon, (A good team cost from five to six hundred dollars.) and travelled to Peace River.

The settlement only consisted of a few buildings then, but there was a ferry to cross the river, so on to Dunvegan, where there was a ferry also. In June 1914, they arrived in Wanham for the first time. They left their trunks here and went to Grande Prairie to file on land. It took three days to get there with the team, on a very narrow trail. They always had to carry an axe and logging chain in order to get through.

It cost ten dollars to file on a quarter of land. The land was not surveyed into quarter sections so they had to step off their own quarters. They came within fifteen feet of being accurate. Since the land was unsurveyed, they were



Hans Mortenson and Gloria Johnson, 1949.

squatters and had to build a shack on the land they wanted, in order to claim it.

There were no roads and nothing but trees everywhere, so building a shack was no problem. It took three or four days to build a one room shack, with sod roof and floor. Sometimes birch bark was shingled over the sod roof, with more sod over the top to hold it flat, to help make it more waterproof. Light in the evenings was provided by a candle or the light from the fire in the stove. Furniture was easy to come by, as there were lots of planks and blocks available for benches and chairs.

Hans Mortenson and Cornelius Olson were the only two people in that area that summer of 1914, though there had been some in before them who left. During that first winter, there were three others to keep them company - the two Bodes (Martin and Emile), and Emile Malander.

The winters were spent hunting and trapping in the Birch Hills and north of Wanham. To get around in the snow, they made skis out of birch. There were lots of moose for meat, tallow for candles, and good trapping for fur.

In order to get some 'grub' and the mail, it was necessary to go to Spirit River by team or by walking. The mail came in over the Edson Trail, but only came as far as Spirit River. Coal oil was three dollars a gallon and flour was eighteen dollars, so not much shopping was done. But at Christmas 1916 the railroad came through Wanham, bringing hope for the future, and making life just a little easier.

In the winters of 1916-17 Hans and Otto Leonard went to the northwest end of the province to trap, near Big Hay Lake. It took three weeks to get there by team on the old Yukon Trail, using eight head of horses. On one occasion, Lawrence Leriger took them up there and someone went to get them in the spring. The first year of

trapping was very good, but they couldn't haul the furs out because it was too heavy a load. They had to sell them up there, where they only got a fraction of the price they could have got from here.

Hans lived in his first shack for five years. He lived in a second one until 1948, then he built a frame house.

CABIN GHOSTS

While Hans still lived in the log house, there was a traveller who always stopped by and stayed overnight with him. Now Hans would never turn anyone away, but he wasn't too fond of this fellow. One night, when the fellow came home with too much liquor under his belt, Hans played a trick on him. He had rolled up some newspapers, placed them in his closet after tying a string from them to his bed. When the fellow woke up about three a.m., Hans started telling him about the ghosts that were in the shack. He pulled the string to make the papers rattle, and the fellow must have believed him, for pretty soon he got up, dressed himself and left, never to return!

The first year that Hans had a crop was in 1916, on five acres that he had managed to get broken with horses. It was a bumper crop on that new land, but was only sold in bundles for feed. In 1918, he traded his horses for a pair of oxen because breaking was too heavy a load for horses. The oxen were slow, but very strong and good-natured. They needed lots of air and water and had to be used at night, because they couldn't stand the heat. Hans was a big man, but he said when the oxen wanted a drink of water he had to get off the plow and go for a swim, because they would wade right in the water for a drink, and he couldn't stop them. One ox weighed about 2500 lbs and the other a little less, so there was little to do but go along with them. With a one bottom, 14" plow, it was possible to break three quarters of an acre in a day.

In 1926, Hans bought a threshing outfit in partnership with Charlie Gellar. It cost them \$2800.00 for the thresher and tractor, but they threshed for thirty-three days the first year and had the outfit paid for in two seasons. There were steel wheels on both machines so it was slow moving, but Hans said it was well worth it, because the 'grub' was the very best, wherever they went.

In the first years, the grain was hauled to Spirit River, with four and six horse teams.

Entertainment was in the way of dances and box socials, and July 1st was always a special occasion. A dance floor was built out in the open, just for the celebration and the donated lumber was all taken back the next day. Hans was one of the original people who donated time and effort to build the first Wanham school and hall.

Hans purchased his first car in 1928, and the last vehicle he bought was a 1949 Dodge half ton that he bought from the old Crummy Garage, in Grande Prairie.

In the late 1940's Hans took up a second homestead, located one mile north of the old Mersey school. Until he got his truck, he would walk from home to do all the clearing and root picking.

His second tractor was a 15-30 McCormick on steel, and then around 1950 he bought a John Deere AR on rubber, which he used until he quit farming. This was in

1964, at which time he was 81 years old.

Summer picnics were something that were very much looked forward to. Hans was always willing to load up his truck with 'grub' that wouldn't fit in the cars and made room for the kids that wanted to ride with him and head for the west Burnt or Dunvegan.

Hans said that if he could have sold his horses, harnesses and wagon that first year, he would have gone back to New York, but as the years went by and this became home, he was always glad that he had stayed.

THE HENRY J. MOSS STORY

by Elaine Dick

Harry Moss came to the Peace River country in April, 1928, with 2 other young men, Norman and Bill Ormiston. They filed on homestead land in the Codesa area - then known as Rahab. The land was good but it was covered with heavy timber that represented years and years of grubbing and root picking. Harry was not too satisfied with the land he had chosen and one day he and another man walked south on a meridian line over the Birch Hills. They came to the area on the north side of the Smoky River, the Smoky settlement. Here some of the land was natural prairie with little bush. Fire had gone through, cleaning off much of the heavy timber. Harry gave up his homestead at Rahab and squatted on land in the Smoky area. The Ormiston brothers followed suit.

They farmed until 1939 when the Second World War broke out. Harry and the Ormiston boys decided to enlist. The Ormiston boys left for overseas but Harry, several years older, was rejected because of his age. He was disappointed but kept farming.

During the 1950's Harry decided to sell his land in the Smoky area and move into Wanham. He bought one quarter of land close to town, just to have something to do. He was planning a trip to England.



Harry Moss celebrates his birthday with Tara Zamorsky on her first birthday.

I'M LOOKING FOR DAD

One day, Bud Ireland, the U.G.G. elevator man was reading the Legionaire, a magazine for war veterans when he noticed an ad asking if anyone knew the

whereabouts of one Henry J. Moss. It said a daughter was interested but everyone knew Harry was an incurable bachelor. Unbelieving, Bud showed it to Harry and an incredible story came to light.

Harry was born in England in 1891 and came to Canada in 1903. In 1916 he enlisted in the army and returned to England where he was married in 1918. After his discharge in 1919, he brought his young bride to Saskatchewan where they lived on a homestead and where a daughter was born. Things were not going well on the farm and his wife was ill and terribly homesick. In 1923 she returned to England with their small daughter. The plan was that Harry would get established and send for them. The years passed and in the early thirties he was reluctant to bring his family to the Smoky. Life on the homestead was pretty primitive and Canada was in the middle of the depression. His daughter was ready for school and the nearest school was in Peoria some 12 miles away. Then in 1935 a weird coincidence cut off all communication. Another man by the name of Moss was killed in a hunting accident in central Alberta. Somehow Harry's brother and wife in England got word of it and presumed it was Harry so they stopped writing. As for Harry, he knew nothing of this but he said he was never good with a pen and out on the homestead he sometimes wouldn't get mail for months on end. So the years went by, but now, that the hard years were over he had planned to return to England to search for his family.

Harry was astounded by the ad in the magazine. Could it be a hoax or a prank? He just didn't know what to make of it. He wrote to the given address in southern Alberta and waited anxiously for a reply. It came and it turned out that indeed it was his daughter. She had married a man from Raymond, near Lethbridge, and had lived there since the end of the war. Not really satisfied with the account of his death, she decided to see if she could find out anything about him, hence the ad. Luckily someone from Wanham happened to see it.

Harry's daughter came to Wanham to be reunited with him and he discovered he had four lovely grandchildren to get to know.

For a few years Harry spent the summers in Wanham working on his land and spent the winters in Raymond where the climate is much milder. Then ill health began to plague him and he moved permanently to Raymond. He is now 89 years old and considers himself extremely lucky. Not many men who spend their lives alone on a homestead in the north find a ready-made family in their declining years.

THE MUMBYS

by Sam Parlee

Ernest and his wife Maria, along with Fred and his wife Ada arrived in Canada from England in April 1911.

Fred had been to Canada at an earlier date and had worked for a farmer, but the others had no experience on the farm.

They homesteaded 12 miles north of Sheho, Saskatchewan, in what later became known as the Stonyview District. The name was considered to be very appropriate as the soil was very embedded with stone.

When the men walked over the land prior to filing, they were delighted with the abundant growth of grass. They learned later however that it was impossible to cultivate the land on account of the stone.

Fred sold out in the twenties and bought a barber shop at Evesham, Saskatchewan, from Lawrence Wilson who later moved to the West Vale District with his wife Mary and daughter Thelma. Ernest and Maria developed a dairy herd with some pedigreed stock, and raised a family of four girls. The school was close at hand having been built on Fred Mumby's land. The girls could run home for dinner both winter and summer, and Ernest was a secretary of the school board.

In 1937 he was in failing health and sold his livestock. They shipped their household effects along with Robert Parlee, who was in the process of migrating to the Peace, where his folks had settled eight years earlier.

They loaded the car mainly with furniture, also a cow and three driving horses, a buggy and top cutter. The 'Rev. R.E.' was then an ordained minister, who was prepared for road conditions of the thirties. He had motored in a few days in advance with Mrs. Mumby, her younger daughters Eva and Edna, also Bob Jr.

Ernest rode in the boxcar as most settlers did at the time. It took the greater part of the week to get to Wanham but he did have the company of a dog and the horses. The cow gave milk which he shared with the brakie. The hens laid eggs for the engineer.

On September 19th, at midnight, under a beautiful harvest moon the car was spotted at the loading platform. We had been threshing all day but we had closed down early enough to be there when the train pulled in. We loaded the entire shipment into the bundle racks and landed back at my folks in time for an early morning breakfast.

The eldest daughters, Edith and Ada, joined their folks on May 10th, 1938, from Saskatchewan. Later Fred, Ernest's brother came to live with Ernest and Maria. He worked for Fred Birdsall one summer. He also stooked and threshed for us a number of times. One year he put the crop in for the Murphys, when Art was in the hospital. Fred was a light-hearted man, with a perpetual



Ernest and Marie's Wedding Day, 1909.

smile and a merry twinkle in his bright blue eyes. He went back to Saskatchewan in the late 40's to visit relatives and passed away while there.

Ernest never did go into farming again. He and Maria lived in retirement in the Nels Lee house until shortly before Mr. Mumby's death, in 1952. He had served as secretary for the West Vale School Board for a time. Here was a couple who spent a great deal of their time just helping others. Their example of self-denial and practical Christianity made a lasting impression on their family and grandchildren.

Mrs. Mumby moved to Sexsmith and lived in a little place of her own, not far from her daughter, Edna, who was also a widow at the time. In 1963 Maria was laid to rest beside her beloved Ernest, in the West Vale Cemetery.

JAMES NOBLE MUNRO

by Ken Munro

James Noble Munro, was born on the 29th day of August 1887, in the Parish of Alness, Rossshire, Scotland. After finishing most of his education at Kiltearn School Evanton, he served as an apprentice miller at Culcairn Mills in the same Parish. In June, 1908 he sailed for the United States arriving in Duluth, Minnesota, where he had two uncles. He worked with his uncles for a few years then decided to see more of the U.S.A. thus. This took him through various jobs mostly in the Western States. When Canada declared war on Germany in 1914 Jim crossed into Canada and in October of that year at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, he enlisted in the 28th Battalion Northwest Regiment Royal Canadian Engineers, then being formed with Lieutenant Colonel J.F.L. Embury of Regina in Command. The Regiment took most of its training in Winnipeg until the spring of 1915 when they embarked for England and finished training at Shorncliffe on the South Coast. Shortly after this, the Battalion was ordered to France to be part of the Sixth Brigade then being formed into the Second Division C.E.F.

WOUNDED

The Second Division were in the front lines at the terrible battle of Mount Kemmel where Jim was wounded in the head. He was also wounded at Passchendael and again at Hill 60. In the first German gas attack Jim was badly gassed as the Canadians had no protection at this period of the war against gas. The effects of this remained with Jim all his life. Vimy Ridge, Ypres, Mons were all battles that Jim was engaged in. It was during one of the attacks by the Canadians at Mons that Jim's friend, Jack Murray, was severely wounded and unable to walk. Jim went out into "No Mans Land" and carried him on his back to safety in the trenches.

Jim served with the Second Division until the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918. Jim had a record of front line service unequalled by very few men in Canada except of course, the regular soldiers. He won the Star of Mons, the General Service Medal and the Allied



Ken and Jim Munro's mother, an early resident of West Vale.

Victory Medal.

After demobilization Jim decided that he would like to farm so he and a friend, Adam Bayne, heard of land being available in the Peace River country. After looking over the different areas opened for settlement they filed on land in Heart Valley (then reserved for returned men). This entitled them to a homestead and soldiers grant 320 acres all told. Adam Bayne only stayed for about a year intending to come back but never did. Jim subsequently relinquished his rights in Heart Valley and filed on land in Peoria. Then he commenced to prove his holdings but as there was not much prospect for farming at that time he went back down to the United States until he was notified that his land was cancelled. In order to save it he had to return and live on it. However, he was able to save his Soldier's grant as the person cancelling him was an alien. Obtaining his homestead rights back he filed on land in the West Vale District. In the early years of settlement there was no direct road to Wanham. There was a trail out to what was then known as the Grizzly Bear Post Office, now called Belloy and another trail out to Prestville and on to Spirit River. There was a trail of sorts out to Sexsmith but this was rarely used. To find out if there was a shorter outlet to the railway Jim was the first person to follow the heavily timbered cutline north through the Birch Hills to the town of Wanham. It was on the basis of his report that a recommendation was made to the government to provide funds for a road north from Heart Valley to the railroad. This road is now a splendid highway.

During the rush in 1922 to the Platinum strike on the Smoky River east of Peoria, Jim was one of the promoters in this venture by locating prospectors and selling lots. This was spear headed by a blacksmith from Sexsmith. It is very debatable if there was platinum there. I believe all the area had been salted but it did create a lot of excitement at the time.

Later, Jim sold the remainder of his land in Peoria and farmed in the West Vale District. In 1938 he and a partner went into the railway tie and saw log contract. This venture was not very successful so in 1939 they decided to close down operations. In the same year 1939, Canada declared war on Germany. Jim again offered his services to his country. On May 8th 1941, he was ac-

JAMES NOBLE MUNRO

by Ken Munro



James Munro as a young man.

cepted to the 30th Company Veterans Guard of Canada. This unit was used mainly to guard German prisoners of war and Military establishments in Canada. It was during this time that he married a girl he had known in his younger years in the United States. The result of this union was a daughter born to them.

After peace was declared in 1945 Jim was demobilized and returned to farming again in the West Vale District. He was one of the first in that area to see the possibilities of growing Creeping Red Fescue as a cash crop as the soil was suited to this kind of a crop. In October of 1962 he sold his holdings and retired to live at Wanham.

LAST CANADIAN

It was during his retirement that he desired to visit the grave of his World War buddy George Price, who was killed by a German sniper two minutes before peace was declared 11th, November 1918. He was the last Canadian to be killed in the war. The opportunity was offered to Jim at the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Mons. He was one of the 1914-1918 Veterans to make the overseas pilgrimage.

Following the ceremonies at Mons he paid his respects at the grave of his wartime buddy (there is now a fine monument erected to his memory).

On the way home he took ill in Montreal but was able to continue on to Edmonton where he entered the Colonel Mewburn Pavilion of the University Hospital. Jim died on the 7th day of December 1968. His body was brought home and on the 12th day of December he was buried in Heart Valley Cemetery with full Royal Canadian Legion honours. His wife and daughter now reside in Sacramento, California.

In 1908 James Noble Munro left Scotland to emigrate to the United States hoping to make his fortune. Six years later the hostilities began and he came to Canada where he enlisted in the 28th Battalion of the Royal Canadian Engineers. Arriving in Europe he received his Baptism of Fire in September 1915 at Laos. Later he was in the terrible Battle of Mount Kemmel where he received shrapnel wounds at his head and shoulders; at Pashendael near Ypres he was wounded in the left leg by a grenade; Hill 60 where he received a wound in the right hip.

Blessed with a remarkable memory James Noble Munro recalls that at his last engagement he witnessed an aerial combat where an aircraft bearing the tri colours was downed by German fliers. A little later he learned of the death of the great hero George Guynemer. It was this aircraft that Mr. Munro had seen crash behind enemy lines.

He recalls that the road leading to Mount Kemmel, an absolute furnace, was called suicide road, which with dark humour was the front where the Royal Canadian Engineers suffered terrible losses.

The Armistice? Mr. Munro recalls with emotion that the 11th of November 1918 at 10:58 a.m. being two minutes before the Cease Fire as he was leaving a house a short distance from Mons.

After the hostilities our Scotsman returned to Canada and Peace River where he began farming. He put away his decorations won on the battle field; the Star of Mons, the General Service Medal. He farmed mostly cereal grains.

In the province of Alberta the thermometer often drops to 35 degrees below zero whereas the summers are often extremely warm. The harvests are therefore very rich and desirable. He farmed until 1944 when at 56 years of age this bachelor took a wife. He married a young and beautiful woman 20 years his junior who a short while later presented him with a beautiful daughter who now lives near Hollywood in California.

After the death of his wife, James Noble Munro began a well earned retirement but he had always desired to visit the grave of his great friend George L. Price at Mons. This opportunity was offered to him at the 50th anniversary of the Armistice and he did not hesitate. He left Peace River at the beginning of October and proceeded to Edmonton. He left by air for Montreal on the 8th of October and took the Trans Atlantic Voyage to London where for six days he visited his 76-year old sister.

His medicine - French Cognac.

From the capital of the British Isles this Odogenarian landed at Lesquin on his extraordinary voyage. In his suitcase along with the necessary items he had a bottle of his "medicine" which according to him cures all ills, some real good true French Cognac.

Mr. Munro visited the grave of his friend killed fifty years earlier two minutes before the cessation of hostility. His pious duties completed he left for London, Montreal, and Peace River where in his baggage he had his inseparable Cognac.

A great welcome and long life again to James Noble Munro a proud Scotsman, Hero of the 14-18 battles, who loses his smile only when speaking of his long lost friend George L. Price whom he has never forgotten.

Mr. Munro's brother Bill was the first Canadian to volunteer for active service overseas in the 1914-1918 world war. He joined up with the Royal Canadian Light Horse Artillery, Hamilton Ont.



The Ken Munro Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Bonnie, Ken and Margaret. Front Row: Dorothy, Olga and Alan.

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

by Ken Munro

I Kenneth Munro was born in the Parish of Kilcainr, Ross Shire, Scotland, on the 14th day of October 1903. After receiving my education in Evanton I joined the Forestry Commission to learn all about Forestry in the Navar Forest belonging to the late Lord Navar one time Governor General of Australia. Lord Navar was at that time one of the foremost authorities in the world in the field of Arboriculture. Besides taking forestry I also went to night school classes taking courses to become a member of the Police force. Needless to say I passed all my exams. In the meantime my brother Jim was urging mother and myself to join him in Canada where he had taken up land in Alberta. Mother was a widow and I was the youngest of the family. We took his advice and sold all our possessions by auction. We sailed for Canada from Glasgow on the 31st day of July, 1925 on the Canadian Pacific Steamship Metagama known as the Bride Ship as so many brides of servicemen who served overseas during the World War I sailed to Canada on this ship to be with their husbands. After a stopover in Hamilton, Ontario we arrived in Calgary our destination

where I obtained employment immediately with the C.P.R. stores at Ogden Shops. I worked there for two years until the end of August, 1927 when I had to appear at the Dominion Land office in Grande Prairie to take possession of homestead as Jim had filed by proxy for me in April. In the meantime Mother had already joined Jim on the homestead in Peoria. The land Jim filed on for me was the N.E. 1/4 of section 19-76-3-W6th. Jim having filed on the N.W. 1/4. During the winter of 1927-28 we built a shack on my quarter so we lived there. The first few years on the homestead were uneventful. Although my maternal grandparents had been farmers in Scotland, I had no experience whatever in farming. Everything had to be learned the hard way. Mother was a big help in some ways especially with animals being a farmer's daughter. I also received a lot of advice and help from our neighbours the Noble Johnstons. This very hospitable family was also a great help to quite a number of settlers coming into the area to file on land at this time. Their home was open to all and sundry in the early days. The Johnston home was also the social joint for most of the bachelors for whoever brought the mail from Heart Valley Post Office dropped it off at Johnston's so Saturday night was always party night until we were able to procure a Post Office in the district.

NEW SCHOOL

As the new settlers with families moved into the area a need for a school became evident. In 1929 a meeting was held at the home of William Parlee to elect a slate of trustees to organize a school district and to select a site for the future building. Those elected at the meeting were Lawrence Wilson chairman, William Hallock and David Funk. I was appointed as Secretary-treasurer and the name chosen was West Vale S.D. No. 4423 and site decided upon was on the N.W. corner of the N.W. 1/4 of Sec. 29-76-3-W6. The building was constructed of logs and the work was all done by volunteer labour with the exception of a man to oversee the finishing of the work. This was a very attractive building and we were all quite proud of it. We were able to get a small grant from the Dept. of Education for equipment and supplies and with great expectations school was opened in 1930 with Miss Alice Hawkinson (who later became Mrs. Arthur Johnston) as the first teacher. The School now became the social center of the district. Christmas concerts were the highlight of the year and were eagerly looked forward to.

A United Farmers of Alberta Local was then organized with me again as Secretary-treasurer and Arthur Johnston as President. This was a very active organization having a membership at one time of 74. Business of the community was always conducted first then a program and ending with lunch and coffee provided by the ladies. West Vale UFA local can take some credit for having a roof erected over the stockyards at Wanham N.A.R. Station to provide shelter for the animals being shipped. I can also take credit while I was secretary of the U.F.A. Local to have a U.F.A. bulk station built at Wanham. The late Mr. Hugh Allen was Director for the Peace River Country at the time. I ap-

proached him during a convention I attended as a delegate and he assured me that as soon as building materials and equipment was available Wanham would be one of the first bulk stations to be built. This was after the war when materials were scarce. As we now know Mr. Allen kept his word. I remember the first agent was Mr. Albert Leriger.

A baseball team was also formed. Teams from Peoria, Wanham and Belloy with a grand windup played at Central Hall during the annual picnic. Times were hard as we were into the great depression but life went on much the same. West Vale annual picnics were always held in different locations until a permanent place was found at the Kadot Lake Park. This was another project that I was involved in during it's earlier stages of planning. The trees that were planted were my responsibility. A Ceramic club was formed for winter pastime and to provide funds mainly for the annual Christmas party for the school children of the district. In 1951 a new school was built on the S.E. corner of Section 22 Range 4 land belonging to Paul Nagel. The original log building was retained by the district and used as a meeting place. We also organized a Farmer's Union of Alberta Local sometimes A.F.U. at other times F.U.A. I was also instrumental in organizing this movement and was elected Secretary-treasurer with Mr. Harry Beamer President. To increase membership and be more effective we joined with the Heart Valley Local. Roads were a big concern to the residents in the early days, many meetings were held and letters written and delegates appointed on this thorny question to bring to the attention of the Highway's Department the need for roads. Especially the terrible condition of the road north to Wanham. There was a lot of colourful descriptions some not fit for print given to certain sections. I hope that someone else will describe this road in detail.

CENTRAL HALL

The Central Hall was a project in which all three districts Peoria, Heart Valley, West Vale and the town of Wanham were involved in. This was at one time the most popular Hall in the Central Peace for dances. Car loads of dancers coming from as far as Grande Prairie. For a long time regular dances were held every Saturday night run by Jim and Irene Balkan who had the store and Post Office in Heart Valley.

I was also elected a trustee of the hall representing West Vale and for a time was chairman of the Hall committee. We had many other clubs in West Vale such as the Agricultural Society, the Bull Club, Boar Club etc. all of which I was involved in.

To go back earlier there was a big bush fire that swept through the country in 1930 and again in 1931. It was a terrifying thing as there was little or no protection as very little land was broken then. Fortunately there was no loss of life but some buildings were burned in those days. There was no attempt by governments to extinguish fires.

Mother passed away in 1941 after a very active life and is buried in Heart Valley Cemetery.

In 1943 I married Olga Parchav. We had a family of three girls and the youngest a boy. Bonnie the oldest is

married to Brian Fredland. They farm at Forth Creek and have a family of two boys and one girl. Margaret is Supervisor of Manpower Services here in Grande Prairie. Dorothy is married to Lee Sloan and is Secretary for a large trucking Company. Alan is in partnership in Red Line Powercraft Ltd., Grande Prairie.

In 1961 a fastball team was organized and named Kadot Cougars. I was again recruited to be Sec. and Manager. We played in the Central Peace Fastball League. We had some excellent players but were always weak in pitching staff. Home games were played at David Wilsons.

Then there were years when we had early frosts cutting the yield and grade of the crops. 1933 I remember was a complete loss. We had a very severe hailstorm in July of that year wiping out everything. Some crops recovered but an early frost in the fall put an end to the crops for that year. 1962 and 1965 and I believe 1969 were also hail years.

When the United Grain Growers organized the first locals I was appointed to the Rycroft Local there being no organization then at Wanham. I was a delegate to the Annual meeting of the Company in 1950 to Calgary and again in 1955 to Winnipeg. This was the fall when we received 44 inches of snow at one time from 31st October to 2nd November. This same storm went all the way to Winnipeg.

After having a major operation in the spring of 1961 my health was not too good so my kind neighbours got together and put my crop in, something that I was very grateful for. As our family was now growing up we wanted them to have a good education. In 1964 we decided to move to Grande Prairie where I was fortunate to find employment with the Federal Government in charge of the Federal Building and Olga obtained work in the Hospital. I was also an exhibitor of creeping Red Fesque at all the local Seed Fairs taking quite a few first prizes. I also exhibited at the Calgary Seed Fair and on two occasions I was second at the World Fair in Toronto.

I should mention that in 1954 electric power came to the district which wrought one of the greatest changes of



Ken Munro, President of the Golden Age Club in Grande Prairie.

our rural life removing much of the drudgery from farm life. February 22, 1955 was a red letter day in our home for on that day we were hooked up to the power line. Since coming to Grande Prairie I have been active on the Senior Citizen's Association, President for four years also a board member on the Volunteer Services Bureau and one of the Vice presidents of the Fruit and Vegetable sections of the county fair.

NOTES PERTAINING TO WEST VALE

by Ken Munro

The first known white men to come into the district of West Vale were two Norwegian coal miners, they located and opened up a coal mine on the N.W. 1/4 of Section 18, 76-3. They hauled this coal out to Spirit River but soon gave up as the seam was not thick enough and the market too far, although the coal was of quite good quality. This mine was again opened up in 1935 by Alex Edey and Jim Munro the coal being hauled out to Wanham by horses and sold.

The first man to erect buildings and break land was named - Dawnie he had filed on the S.E. 24-76-4. After living on his place for sometime he left to go "Outside" and never returned but the snug cabin that he built on his land was used by successive homesteaders until such time as they were able to erect their own cabins.

WILD HORSES

Wild horses were found roaming the country when the first settlers arrived. These horses were believed to have been abandoned by the miners on their way north to the Klondike gold rush in 1898. There was a trail from Sturgeon Lake that went through the district to Fort St. John. These horses were not of much use as they were quite small and very unmanageable when caught. Bert Sales had caught and broke some of them.

Traces of Indian campsites were still in evidence when the district was first settled. Skeletons of teepees were scattered throughout the area and on the west half of Section 18-76-3 baskets made from birch bark were to be found. These baskets were used to catch the sap of the birch trees in the spring. They notched the trees and attached the baskets. The sap was used to make a kind of syrup. Artifacts such as arrow heads, spear heads, scrapers etc. were picked up when the land was broken.

DEAD MAN'S HILL

The Indians had named the Hill known as Jim's Hill "Dead Man's Hill" as this is where the body of a man was found. One of the reasons for the Indians inhabiting this part of the country was good hunting, lots of wild fruit and a plentiful supply of water there being quite a number of good springs.

Wanham is an Indian name meaning Warm Winds.

There is much untold and more forgotten as it should be. I have mentioned the general community of those years when I saw churches, school and community hall come into being where I was active and tried to do my



Fred and Emma Murphy on their wedding day, January 8, 1906.

best.

I have always been proud of my mother. She was a wonderful woman. There is no influence in the world on a family like a good mother and I was blessed with one and my own family is also blessed with a good mother.

THE MURPHYS

by Barry Murphy

Frederick Michael Murphy and Emma Jane Chambers were married in Dorchester, New Brunswick, in 1906. Their move to the west was to be a gradual but progressive one. This is borne out by the fact that no two of their surviving children were born in the same region of the country. Their final move was to the Peace River District.

The Murphy family arrived at Milepost 335 on the ED & BC Railroad, (later the N.A.R.) in the spring of 1917. With them they brought two railway car loads of family, livestock and farm machinery. The family consisted of three sons and two daughters - Kathleen, James (Jim), Mary Frances (Mollie), Charles (Barry), and Walter (Judson). The livestock was comprised of four horses, Bob, Frank, Mable and Nell, a cow named Chub and a flock of geese. The whole menagerie was rounded out by two dogs, Bob and Jeff. With them they also brought a quantity of Marquis seed wheat.

The Murphys were made welcome by their new neighbors, to the extent that one of them even turned over his log cabin to the family. This gentleman was Emil Mellander, and he then moved into a shack not far away. They settled in and began farming the Mellander land.

BEAR MEAT "TREAT"

Fred Murphy had the first grain binder, (a six foot Deering) in the area and cut crops all over the area. He later told the story of the bear meat. In those days there was no refrigeration, so any meat that was obtained was portioned out among the neighbors for use, before it spoiled. Well, it worked out that every place he went to cut grain had newly shot bear as a treat for the harvester. It wasn't too long before he could hardly get a meal down, or keep it down, for that matter. However, as it was meant as a special treat, he kept trying. He used to

tell, "That damn bear followed me around like it was still alive!"

When the first Christmas arrived, Emma Murphy was able to thank the bachelors in the area by cooking up a goose dinner. With the help of a wall tent joined to the cabin and warmed by a heater, there was enough room and a good time was had by all. Christmas dinner at the Murphys became a tradition that lasted many years. In later years it was to be continued by Mollie (Murphy) Tansem.

It was not long after that Christmas dinner that the bachelors were to be called upon once again to help the Murphys. The whole family came down with the flu epidemic of 1918. For some reason, most of the bachelors didn't seem to catch it. It was later believed that tobacco chewers were somehow immune to the flu! It was this epidemic that was to cause the first Murphy casualty, as



The Fred Murphy Family. Left to Right: Kathleen, Fred, Emma, Jim, Mollie, Barry and Shirley.

young Walter Judson was not to survive it. His tiny coffin was buried not far from the cabin. Later, when the family got their own homestead, they moved Judson to a small burial plot on the east boundary of the homestead. This was close to what was then the main road, which came wandering through from the Art Campbell place which lay to the east. Judson was joined there by the first born child of Hjalmer and Laura Tansem. Soon another child, Lucille Dollan, who died of a ruptured appendix, was also laid there to rest.

The first Murphy abode was a shed type building, constructed mostly of wood slabs, with a roof of poplar shingles made by the Mellander-Murphy shingle mill. This was an ingenious apparatus made by placing pre-soaked poplar blocks in a circle. A sweep with a very sharp plow share attached was then set to cut a thin slice off each block. The power was provided by Murphy's horses.

This first shed was the birthplace of a third daughter, Shirley. With no other help available, she was helped into this world by her father, Fred. The other children were put to bed in the barn by their uncle Mark, (later Father Mark Murphy) who told them stories late into the night. Later they were able to return to the house and see their new sister.

In time the family moved into a two storey house, built with lumber from the Ed Prevost saw mill. Fire was always a danger, so Fred and his brother Amby, who was

visiting, made sure that the bedrooms upstairs were well protected by fire escapes.

It was here that a fourth son was born, again with only Fred in attendance. It was a difficult birth, which the baby did not survive. The baby Murphy joined his brother and the two other children in the little burial plot. Later when the Wanham-Belloy Cemetery came into being, on the St. Pierre land, all four small casualties of pioneer life were moved to this cemetery, where they rest to this day.

Emma later assisted in the birth of several children, including the babies of Ukrainian and Polish women who could not yet speak English. To be able to communicate with the women in labor, she used to take Walter Stepaniuk along as an interpreter. She would set him in a corner with his back turned and talk through him. She said that the sweat would just roll off him, during these ordeals.

The Murphy children attended the South Slope School, where they made many life long friends. The school was a one room building in which the teachers taught many grades. The school also served as a church and community hall. Later a hall was built, and it was here that Shirley came near to a bad accident. The Christmas tree was decorated with candles, as there was no electricity. Shirley, with her cloud of curly hair, got too close to the tree and her hair caught fire. Irene Ziegler was quick as a flash, beating out flames with her bare hands. Shirley did not even get a blister.

In those days it was usual to go to a dance or social in patched overalls and moccasins, as times were hard and very few had anything better to wear. It was at these dances and socials that Fred's talent as a fiddle player was put to good use.

It was because of hard times that Fred took work on the railroad. He became a section foreman and had to work ten to forty miles from home. It was hard on the family, but the children were growing up, and under the



Shirley (Murphy) Hunter.



Kathleen (Murphy) Greany.

direction of Emma, they were able to keep the home place going.

When Fred retired from the railroad, the last son at home, Barry, left to look for work. With the help of Kathleen and her husband Pat Greany, who had been a store keeper in Wanham, he was able to get employment in Edmonton. A short time later they were joined by Shirley.

This left two Murphy children in the Peace River

District. Jim Murphy homesteaded some land around Wanham, which he later sold. He now makes his home in Spirit River. He inherited his father's talent of playing the fiddle.

Mollie is the last of the Murphys to live in Wanham. She married Cliff Tansem, and they farmed land in the area for many years.

Fred and Emma retired to the town of Wanham, after farming alone for a time. Later the land was sold.

Fred and Emma have gone for their reward, but they are survived by three daughters and two sons. There are also grandchildren and great grandchildren, spread all the way from California to Whitehorse.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE BACHELORS

A pioneer remembers Christmas Day in the Peace River Country

- when the west was young-
by Shirley Murphy Hunter

"No, No - it hasn't enough branches," said the woman, peevishly rejecting another Christmas tree." Let's see that one there in the back row."

While the salesman tugged it out, she turned to me, shrugging her coat back on her shoulders. "Really," she said, "It's so difficult to find a good one. And I think it's so important - for my children, you know. When I was a child, we always had the nicest Christmas tree on the block. It's the part of Christmas I remember best - don't you?"

I smiled, remembering Christmas in our farmhouse in the newly settled Peace River Country. Then, spruce boughs hung above doors and windows, red and green streamers criss-crossed the living room ceiling. The big red bell in the centre swayed in the warmth drifting up from the heater. Mingled with the tang of spruce, were the nose-tickling delight of oranges, apples and hard candy; and through it all, when Mother opened the oven door, the smell of roast goose with sage dressing. The oven was so full, Mother could barely close the door, since our family was tripled for Christmas dinner. In those days, many homesteads belonged to our bachelor friends. During the year, one or another would appear at our kitchen door with a laden flour sack, saying, "Care for some moosemeat, Mrs. Murphy? Shot it yesterday - too much for one man to use up."

Or if Father was hauling wood, a bachelor would say, "Just happened to be going by and thought maybe you could use a hand, Fred."

To us children they were like indulgent uncles. A visit to one of their homes meant a warm welcome and a treat from the bag on the kitchen shelf. Christmas was a doubly joyous day for us because the bachelors were invited to dinner.

Christmas morning began early. Somehow Santa Claus always filled my stocking. My memories are of a festive jumble of activity. Mother would say, "Goodness, how time flies - we must get these in the oven or they'll never be done for dinner." Mollie and Kathleen hurried, helping Mother, and setting the table, stretched full length with extra boards. Father and Jim and Barry



Shirley and Bruce Hunter on their wedding day.

dashed between house and barns tending the stock.

Finally, dressed in our best, the family gathered in the living room. A church in that district was years in the future, but I remember kneeling beside my little rocker, as Father led us in family prayers.

Prayers over, we watched anxiously through the windows for our company to arrive. Then someone would call, "There they come. I see Carl and Richard - and Richard's carrying his violin." Then one of us would spot a sleigh coming from the other direction, and shout, "Here come some more - I think its Charlie and Hans and Pete and Olson!"

As each guest opened the kitchen door with a whoosh of frosty air, there was a chorus of "Merry Christmas," from everyone. Each arrival stood on the hooked rug to remove his boots, and there was always an exchange of friendly insults as he peeled off his layers of outer clothing.

"Well, Jack, I thought that was Santa Claus under all that clothing."

"Nah, he looks more like that bear I saw on my place last fall."

"Say, the way you fellows are all dressed up, you'd think the new school teacher hadn't gone home for Christmas." Their coats and caps hung along the wall in the kitchen, they moved on to join the crowd in the living room. Richard's violin was hung beside Father's beloved 'fiddle' to warm up. Bert always brought his gramophone, and the cylinder records were carefully unpacked. I remember the feel of those records, like silky ice. We children would have parcels thrust into our hands, with a whispered, "Just a little something for Christmas."

Although our living room was not large, it never seemed crowded, as the walls echoed with laughter and

music. Pipes were lit and jokes exchanged, in accents of different countries.

"Hey, Joe, isn't that a new nosewarmer you're smoking. The curve on that stem, you're apt to burn your chin."

"Never mind, at least I don't use that old Copenhagen snoose!"

In all the jokes and stories told, there was never a word unfit for childish ears, as I went from lap to lap, to confide what Santa had brought.

Then came Christmas dinner. From oyster stew, heritage of my parent's eastern background, through the roast goose, to mince or pumpkin pie, Mother's cooking was superlative. To be truthful, though, it is not the Christmas memory that stands out most clearly. It was the warm and wonderful feeling of looking up from my plate and seeing around the table not only my own family, but our bachelor friends.

"No!", I wanted to tell the woman buying her tree. "I remember friends of many religions being a part of our family on Christmas Day."

But of course, I was an especially lucky child.

THE HISTORY OF THE MURPHYS

by Mollie (Murphy) Tansem

It was the twentieth of April, 1917, when Fred and Emma Murphy and their five children, Kathleen, Jim, Barry, Judson, and myself, Mollie, arrived here. It had taken close to three weeks to come from Tiny, Saskatchewan, This whole area was then called 'Grizzly Bear Prairie'. Grizzly Bear Prairie, west-end, became Wanham, later, and Grizzly Bear Prairie east-end, became Belloy.

It was a dark, rainy night when the freight train shunted two big box cars of our stock, machinery and household effects on to the side track. Kathleen, Jim, Barry and myself were perched on some sacks of grain up in one end of the box car. We were almost dislodged from our perch there, several times during the terrific bumping around to get the box cars finally on the side track. In the other box, car, the horses were whinnying in terror, the cow was bawling, the two dogs barking and the gander and two geese added their honking protest to the racket. The freight train pulled away, giving a couple of extra toots of farewell to us. All we heard then was the rain drumming down on the box car roof. We were in total darkness, no light to be seen anywhere. Father lit the coal oil lantern. That helped a bit.

We'd gone through to Spirit River on the passenger a few days before, to wait for the freight train with the stock and our stuff. Father wanted to look at the map of available land there, too. The land office was there. It was there he met Emil Malander, and rented his land. Father had a full line of horse machinery including a 'Deering' binder, the first binder in this area. He had also met Lawrence Leriger, who agreed to meet the freight and take us out to Emil Bode's. We were to stay a couple of days, until the floor was put in the small shack we were to live in on Malanders place.

It seemed an eternity that we sat in that box car with

the rain pouring down, until finally we heard a wagon approaching. It was Lawrence Leriger, and soon we were all in the wagon, going through dense bush. It wasn't really a road. There were deep pot holes and big roots that we jolted over. The hubs of the wagon bumped into huge trees. The wet branches hanging over the road kept slapping us in the face. Then we came to an opening and at the end of it we saw our first light, glimmering not too far away. It turned out to be Lawrence Leriger's place. We could hear the most unusual sounds, which grew in volume as we came closer. The horses were frightened and tried to run away. When we stopped near the house, someone pulled Leriger off the wagon and someone else grabbed the reins. The noise scared us kids, too. It was a chivaree in progress. Lawrence and Lucille hadn't been married long. The crowd was circling the house, beating on wash tubs, pails, etc., ringing cow bells, and yelling at the top of their lungs. The new driver hopped up on the wagon seat and away we went, close to four miles out to Emil Bode's cabin.

We were so glad to see a light shining in the window. That was journeys end for that day. It was special to see the two kind, friendly faces of Martin and Emil Bode, as they came to lift us out of the wagon. Soon we were drifting off to sleep, snug and warm in the homemade bunks. We stayed there three days. The second day, Mother made bread. The aroma of her good bread must have wafted for miles, because so many bachelors came to sample it. The nearest neighbors, Martin and Emil Bode, Hans Mortenson and Cornelius Olson had been helping Father unload the stock, plus all of the machinery and household effects. This was all taken to Emil Malanders'. They put a floor and a small window in the tiny cabin, but we were still dismayed when we moved into the small, dark, dismal place - after being in the Bode's bright, cheerful cabin.

Father was very busy. He broke a few more acres and seeded it (along with that which Malander already had under cultivation), with the good Marquis seed wheat he had brought from Tiny. This was the first wheat to be seeded in this area.

Every Sunday Father hooked up the team and drove around looking for land. He always took Mother and us kids along. He finally chose the quarter Grandmother Murphy had taken, then given up. This was nearly five miles west. My uncle, Mark Murphy had taken the quarter cornering Grandma's on the north-east. He also gave it up, went back east, and later became a priest.

SHINGLE MILL

Emil Malander built the first and only shingle mill. He had huge blocks of poplar, balm of Gilead, and spruce soaking in the slough for months. The mill was made in a huge circle with places constructed for twelve of the big blocks. He had made a huge steel blade which took our team of horses to pull it around the circle, taking a slice off each block. A huge pile of shingles resulted which he sold near and far. Thus ended the era of sod roofs on the cabins. They were very good shingles, lasting for many years, from 1918 on.

SMALL WHITE FLOWERS

Sadness hit us in May, 1918 when little Judson passed away suddenly. He had been sickly since birth, but it was still a great heartbreak. Father made a small coffin and Mother lined it with some special material from a dress of hers. She picked some small white flowers and placed them in his tiny hands. Father buried him there, on Malanders.

There was no store or post office here when we came in 1917. People had to go to Spirit River to get their mail, clothes, and groceries. Spirit River was close to thirty miles away. Usually one or two people went to pick up the mail and supplies for all the neighbors. Ed Prevost Sr. kept some of the most important staples like flour, salt, coffee, tea, tobacco, syrup, beans and coal oil. The only light people had was coal oil lamps and lanterns. The Pete Tansem family came in the summer of 1917. They started the first store and post office in 1918. That was the first big step towards civilization here.

DAMN BEAR!

In the falls of 1917-18 Father cut all the crops near and far with the Deering binder. The fall of 1917 he was to remember for years to come. Someone had shot a bear. People were very generous then, and shared their meat with the neighbors for miles around. Wherever he went, he had bear meat to eat. He said that damn bear followed him all over the country!

CHRISTMAS AND THE BACHELORS

Christmas was always a big event at our place. Roasted young goose was a must for Christmas dinner. That first Christmas the special bachelors were invited for dinner. There were several - Martin and Emil Bode, Cornelius Olson and Hans Mortenson. I don't know how Mother managed to prepare a big meal in that small shack. In 1918, Charlie Gellar came back from the first world war and became a special neighbor and friend, and spent every Christmas with us, too. When we moved up on our own place in 1919, we found other wonderful neighbors and friends, so our Christmas dinner table had to be greatly enlarged. There was Joe Mayer, Bert Reid, Richard Johnson, Art Campbell, Carl Erstad, Rex Conrad, Hank Hines, Martin Swanson and Bill Caviness. Jack Garrett was always invited but he didn't like a crowd, so Jim always took a box that Mother had filled with goose and all the trimmings, Christmas cake, mince pie and doughnuts. Thus Christmas 1917, was the start of a tradition of 'Christmas at the Murphys', which continued for many years to come.

BOB

1918 brought another sadness. Someone shot our special stock dog, Bob. There was free range here then, so cattle and horses roamed everywhere. There was no barbed wire so people had pole, brush, or snake fences around gardens and feed stacks. Bob was a natural born heeler. Father used to send him over in the field to the

straw stack to bring the cattle and two oxen to the barn. The snow was too deep to see him going, but all at once the big oxen would fling up their tails, bawl their terror and make a bee line for the barn and the cows would follow. One day on the Malander place, he chased a herd of cattle out of our crop and took them all the way home. When Bob didn't come home, Father went to look for him. We had recognized the cattle, so Father went to the owner's farm to inquire about Bob. The man had shot him. We missed our dog, Bob, terribly for a very long time.

SCHOOL

There was no school when we came in 1917, but later that summer Mrs. Duncan Cameron taught school in Eli Barrett's cabin. They had to borrow a kid from Belloy to have a school. Her name was Iva Gilmour and she rode a pinto pony. Kathleen and Jim attended there. The first school meeting was at our shack on Malanders. Father and Pete Tansem were on the first school board. Louie Tansem was the secretary. There was a bee and picnic organized, to clear the site for a new school on the north-east corner of Duncan Cameron's land. Everyone went. The women took lunch. Late that same fall of 1918, the school was built mostly by volunteer labor. The first teacher was Gracia Grey, a niece of Jack Greys'. Ross Archibald was the next teacher. After him came Ella Scott.

School was only held a few months of the year, usually from May to October. At first there were only eight grades taught. Several years later there were two high school grades taught, too, which Barry and Shirley got in on.



Fred and Emma Murphy and daughter, Mollie Tansem, taken on the homestead, December 8, 1961.

INFLUENZA

In 1918 the terrible Spanish influenza came. A lot of people died, including transients walking through the country, mostly looking for land, or work. Everyone was

advised to keep brandy or whiskey in the house. This was obtained by means of a doctors' prescription, from the drug store in Spirit River. We all got the flu, in spite of our parents trying so hard to keep us from getting it. They fumigated the shack with sulphur. I still recall the horrible fumes. Father put the newspapers in the oven to sanitize them. This we hated, because we were most anxious to see the 'funny papers'. Father wouldn't let any strangers in, but Mother would always make them a huge sandwich, so no one went away from our door hungry. We kids came down with it first, then Mother got it. She stayed on her feet as long as she could, then had to go to bed too. Father was the last to get it. I remember how weak we all were. We couldn't eat. Mother, then Father, made a real thin porridge which they called gruel. They also made a good broth from the wild meat our good neighbors brought. It was a special event when I could walk as far as the chicken coop to look for eggs.

CONFUSED!

We were Roman Catholic, but we didn't get to church often. At first mass was held in people's homes, usually at Lerigers or Prevosts. It wasn't always the same priest, altho' it was usually the one from Spirit River who came. I remember that it was at Lerigers, late in 1919, that Shirley was christened. She was born on September 22nd, the first girl baby born in this area. After the school was built, church was held there. The ministers and students never bothered us, except for the time an old Anglican minister came to our place. We were out playing and wondered what strange team was coming to our place. Father was out in the bush getting wood, but came home just in time to stop the old man from trying to make Mother and us kids get down on our knees. Father asked him what business he had at our place. He said that he'd come to try to get Father to mend his ways! Father immediately became angry and said he'd better explain. So the man said that Father had to stop making moonshine! Father said that he had never made moonshine in his life, and asked him to leave. It turned out that there was a Barney Murphy, a bachelor living east of us who did make moonshine. Someone had got their names confused!

Father's most prized possession was his fiddle. He played down east, Don Messer style. He never cared much to play at dances. He played mostly at home or at house parties, but if he was at a dance the crowd would get after him to play a couple of square dances and an old time waltz. My brother Jim played at an early age. I never remember him practising. Seemed as if he just picked up the fiddle and played! His son Keith played the fiddle to start with too, and he and Jim played violin duets for two Christmases. Then he chose the guitar and accordion.

Father was born at Picadilly, New Brunswick, but their house burnt down, so they moved to Norton. Mother was born at Dorchester, New Brunswick. Her father was warden of the penitentiary there for many years.

In the spring of 1919, we moved up on our own place. We were so happy to be there. Father had built a small building from lumber. I will never forget the first morning, waking up to bright sunlight pouring in the



Geraldine and Jim Murphy on their wedding day.

windows. It was wonderful after the dark, dreary shack on Malanders. It was there that Shirley was born, that fall. Many years later she was to laugh and say that she, like Jesus, was born in a stable. The only difference was, He was born in a manger and she was born in a bed!

When we moved into our big new house, the small one became a cow barn. Father added a big square tent onto the small place. We needed more room, as Father's brother had come to stay with us awhile. He worked in Rod McCrimmon's saw mill. The winter of 1919, Father hauled logs to Prevost's mill for lumber for the new house. His brother, Amby, came to help.

UNCLE AMBY'S TRUNK

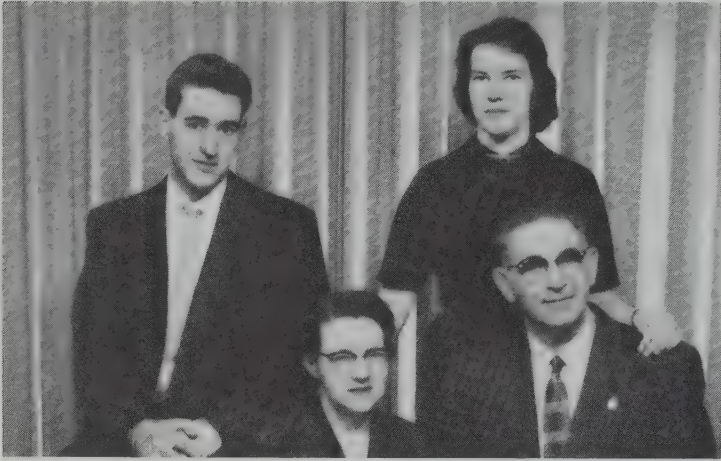
Uncle Amby had quite an experience when he came to Wanham. His trunk was not in the baggage car when the train arrived here. It took days before one of the train crew remembered that it had been put off by mistake, away down the line. He went down to get it and found the man who had it. He was wearing Uncle Amby's clothes, and Uncle Amby's fiddle was hanging on the wall!

Times were still very hard. We got a few more acres broken up every year but it wasn't enough, so Father went to work on the railroad, on the section. The foreman was Andrew Ramsfield. Not too many years later, Father was made a foreman too, but he had to go to other places. Every place he went he had to fumigate the section house for bedbugs. If there were any there, they were sure to find him! He was the foreman at Eaglesham for many years. The trainmen, conductors and brakemen all said they could tell right away when they came to 'Murphy's' track because it was the smoothest.

BODY IN A WASH TUB

It was at Eaglesham that a bad tragedy occurred. It was a bitterly cold night in January, 1926. Father settled down in his rocking chair beside the coal heater for one last smoke on his favorite pipe, and to read a few more pages of the Argosy that had come that day. He was tired, as he and his first man, Chris Knutson, had been out all day on the track. The rest of the crew had been laid off as usual, for the winter. He heard a train whistle blow in the distance and knew it was a freight coming. It seemed to approach more rapidly than usual. When the engineer gave a couple of extra toots, Father laid down his magazine. The train came to a halt and a brakeman came running up the to door. There was a look of horror on his face. He said, "Murphy, there's been a terrible accident. We've run over a man who was walking on the

tracks a few miles west!" He told Father that he'd have to go right away to gather up the remains, and that he'd need a big tub and a tarp. When the freight train left, Father quickly piled on his heaviest and warmest clothing and went over to Chris Knutson's cabin to tell him what had happened. They soon had the hand car on the track and loaded a big wash tub, tarp and a couple of lanterns. When they reached the scene of the awful tragedy, it was grizzly work gathering the scattered limbs and parts of the body, which they placed carefully on the tarp in the tub. They had to pile up some brush beside the track and build a big fire to try and keep warm. Father sent Chris back to Eaglesham, to phone for the police to come from Spirit River. He then kept on chopping down and cutting up dry trees and brush by the side of the track, and adding it to the fire. As he stood there with the axe in his hand, another man appeared out of the night, walking the track. He took one horrified look at the contents of the tub, and then at father standing there, his face and cap ringed with frost, and the axe in his hand. He gave a frightened shriek, turned and went into orbit back up the track. His screams drifted back on the cold night air.



Front Row: Kathleen and Pat Greany. Back Row: Gerald Greany and Eileen (Greany) Neilson.

Chris came back and they stayed for hours on their terrible and lonely vigil, until the police finally came. They never found out who the dead man was. No one could understand why the man had been walking the track in the dead of winter. The conductor had expected that the man would have jumped off the track into the snow, especially after the train whistle blew. It was thought that he was so numb with cold that he hadn't even heard the train coming.

Father was foreman on the railroad for many years before retiring, in 1936. It was rough on all of us, especially Mother, with him gone most of the time, but we continued to get a few more acres cleared each year. Kathleen and Jim were the oldest, so helped the most, and Barry and I helped too. I remember one morning I had to milk the cow because it was threatening to rain, and Jim and Kathleen had to haul in the hay. After that, I had to milk her every day! Sometimes Father got a few days off to do breaking, and for harvesting, but mainly it was Jim's job, and Mother, Kathleen and I did the

stooking. Barry started on the binder at an early age, too. He was good on machinery, and good with the horses, too. Sometimes Joe Mayer or Bert Reid would help us haul in the hay or oat sheaves. We worked hard, both before and after school.

In May, 1922, there was more heartbreak for us Murphys. Mother had a baby boy, but he was born dead. It was an abnormal birth, or Father would have saved him. Mrs. Duncan Cameron was supposed to come, but it was too dark to send Kathleen and Jim with a lantern over two miles, on a path through the bush. Father was so very lucky to save Mother.

The nearest hospital was miles away in Grande Prairie, so most of the women stayed home to have their babies. Mother had been called to deliver babies several times. In December, 1924, a public health nurse was sent in. She came two weeks too late to attend the birth of the Pete Tansems' son, Leroy. Art and Ray Tansem came up for Mother with a lantern. She thought that would be the last baby she would deliver, but sometimes the nurse was away, so she still got called. New families were coming into the country, mostly from Poland and the Ukraine. These people usually called on Mother.

Jim took a homestead in 1927. It was the quarter that Rex Conrad had until he decided to go back to Russia. It was close enough to home to be farmed from there. Jim was working on the railroad at times. In later years he worked steady, until he went into World War II.

Kathleen went into training as a nurse in 1928. She married Pat Greany, when she finished her training and graduated. She went back to nursing some years later.

I went into nurses training, too, in 1929, but quit the following year as I decided a nurse's life wasn't for me. I liked the farm, and married Cliff Tansem a couple of years later.

Everyone looked forward to the dances in the first school. They took their kids too, big and small. When the little ones fell asleep, they were put on benches with some coats thrown over them, to keep them warm. Often someone would come and sit on what appeared to be a pile of coats, only to jump up quickly when they felt a small form start to squirm. Then the screams would erupt and the mother would come running off the dance floor, like an old bell cow, to the rescue of her young!

The women all brought lunch, and during the lunch hour, anyone with special talent would perform. I remember Eddie Fortier step dancing. He was especially good at it. Ross Archibald would sing Scotch songs, Yvonne Prevost danced the highland fling, and Jessie McLean, an Irish jig.

By 1927 the town was growing. The first elevator was built by United Grain Growers. Ralph Pickard came and built a garage and a blacksmith shop. They did a big business sharpening plow shares and shoeing horses, mostly for the farmers who had taken up land several miles south in Heart Valley. They had to cross the Kadot River. It had bad, steep banks. When it was icy in winter, horses had to be sharp shod. Ralph built a house, too, and his mother and brother, Ollie, came to live with him.

St. Pierre's had a coffee shop and ice cream parlor. Later Ed Harrington had a store - The Wanham Mercantile and a lumber yard, Frontier Lumber Co. There



Margaret Murphy, Flying Officer - Barry Murphy, and Mollie Tansem.

was a co-op store built, too. George Ward was the first manager, but he moved to Edmonton. A couple of local men did try to operate it. They were inexperienced. Pat Greany was sent in to manage it early in 1930. He was a good store man and he really tried to get it out of the hole and onto a paying basis, but times were too tough, and the 'hungry thirties' had already begun, so the store was closed.

Barry went to Edmonton in the mid-thirties. He went to work in a bakery there. From there he went to Selkirk, then joined the air force in the Second World War. He was a navigator and got his commission and was made a flying officer. He was overseas close to five years. Jim was overseas five years, too, and was made a lance corporal. He was in the army with the engineers.

Shirley went to Edmonton in the late thirties. She took more schooling, then a business course. Later she also took a course in journalism. She was successful at working, writing and editing.

When Barry left the farm to go to Edmonton to work, Father farmed by himself. The years rolled by. The old Deering binder was finally retired in the late '40's, when combines and swathers came into the country. It had given more than thirty years of good service.

Father's health was failing. He was 73 in 1951, when he and Mother moved to town. Early in 1952, they sold the farm. Father passed away in February, 1953, and Mother bought a small house in town, where she lived until 1965. Her health was poor so she had to move into a nursing home. She passed away in February, 1967, at the age of eighty-six.

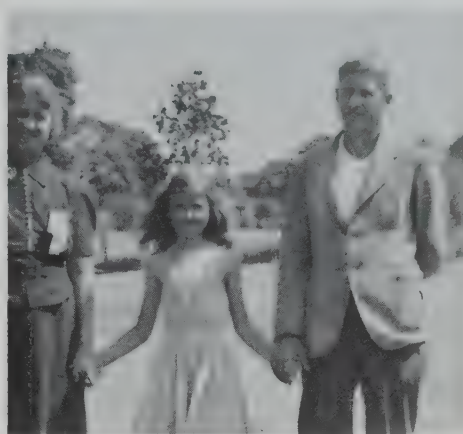
Sometimes on a dark rainy night when a train whistle blows mournfully in the distance, my thoughts go back more than sixty years to a similar dreary night when we 'Murphys' came to Grizzly Prairie. (west - end)

HISTORY OF THE JACK MURRAYS

by Mollie Murphy Tansem

Jack Murray and Bill Newton came to Wanham in 1920. Their land cornered the Murphy land to the south west. They were both returned men, so were entitled to a half section each. They had a section of land all in one block. Jack Murray was a good farmer. He had good work horses. Fred Murphy cut Murray and Newtons crops for

a couple of years. Bill Newton's sister came from England. She married Jack Murray. He built a big house. People came for miles to the house warming and dance. A few years later, Mrs. Murray decided life on the farm wasn't for her so she left. She was a very kind and good neighbour so she was missed by all. She had a cottage at Lake Wabuman, where she passed away many years later. Jack Murray married again. He and Ida had a daughter, Norah. Bill Newton had gone back to England. Jack and Ida Murray and small daughter Norah sold out in the mid 30's and moved to Victoria. Mrs. Murray was in poor health for several years and passed away. Jack passed away a few years ago.



Ida and Jack Murray with daughter, Norah.

THE HISTORY OF MR. JOHN R. MURRAY

as written by Helen Boyd and Wilma Murray

Mr. Jack Murray married Margaret Webb, an opera singer in New York, in 1910. They came to Silverwood, Alberta, in 1912, where they raised 9 children. Three sons - Jack who lives in Ontario, Webb who passed away in 1958, and Peter who farms in Heart Valley. Muriel lives in Edmonton, Ivy and Marj in California, Grace and Georgia in Seattle, and Helen east of Grande Prairie.

He was blessed with 25 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.

Ivy and Marj attended school in Heart Valley for a short time. Helen and Marj attended South Slope High School in 1939 and 1940.

Mr. Murray was a delegate for the F.U.A., and made various trips out to meetings. He was also a great Union man. He sold his farm in Heart Valley on his retirement, and travelled extensively until his death, in 1962.

WILMA MURRAY AND HER FAMILY

by Wilma Murray

I came to Heart Valley District from Lloydminster, where I was born and raised. Pete and I were married in December, 1944, and we raised seven children.

Carol was the eldest, born in 1945, and she was always talking. One time I drove in the ditch, so Carol went home and said, "Mum can sure drive, she drove in the ditch and right out again." She is married to Grant Hill, has a family of four and lives in Calgary.

Sylvia was born in 1947. Sylvia was a lover of sports,



*Left to Right:
Donna Boyd,
Wilma Murray,
Carol and Sylvia
- 1948.*

she never missed a practice - no matter what, she'd stay in town over night. She was a great one to tease. We had a cow with a new calf and Sylvia just made it under the fence, before the cow got to her. She lives in Hay River and is still single.

Ervin was born in 1949, he also was a sport lover. Doug Campbell, the bus driver, used to call him Speed. When he was 13 he spent his summer holidays in the Spirit River Hospital, after burning his leg. Dr. Laventure did his first skin grafting on Ervin. Ervin married Linda Krishka, has a family of 3 and farms south of Wanham.



Left to Right: Grace, Ernie, Willard, Ervin, Sylvia and Carol 1961.

Willard was born in 1950; He played basketball and curled. He graduated and went to University for three years, and he farmed east of Belloy. He married Darlene Urness, and they have two boys. Willard also worked for an oil company. In April, 1981, he passed away.

Ernie, our third son, was born in 1952. Ernie is still active in sports: basketball, curling and baseball. He is an electrician and works for Midwest Electrical Contractors in Grande Prairie. Ernie graduated in Wanham.

Grace was born in 1955. Grace also plays ball and curls. She is a smiling girl and likes farm life. She married Garth Sallis and they live east of Wanham on Sallis' home place. They have 3 children. Grace has also taken up cross-country skiing.

David was born in 1962, took grades one and two in Wanham, then moved to Rycroft and Grande Prairie. He attended St. Josephs High School. David is interested in

sports. He works part time at the General Hospital. He hopes to be a lawyer. David is great company for me, and I will certainly miss him when he leaves home.

The country has certainly improved since I came here; roads, power, telephones and buildings. We had bad times, but also had many happy times. I always said I would never leave Heart Valley, but circumstances changed.

I moved to Rycroft when we were divorced in 1970, then to Grande Prairie in 1971, where I took 'up-grading' and a business course. I also cooked at Circle-J Steak House. After I graduated, I began work at the General Hospital as receptionist and switchboard operator, where I am still employed. I have enjoyed my years here, and hope to be here until I retire.



*David Murray - 5
years old.*

MYRLAND, PETER

Submitted by Emma Peebles

When news reached the area west of Blackfalds, where we resided, that a quarter section of land could be had just for filing on it and paying a nominal fee, (ten dollars, I believe) my dad, Peter Myrland and others decided that this was a golden opportunity to start life anew.

In 1926, he filed on a quarter section seven miles south



*Peter and Ellen Myrland outside their new home across from
Jacobsen's Service Station.*

of Wanham. In 1927, Dad spent the summer on the homestead doing a bit of clearing and building the log house which was to be my parents' home until the early '50's. The house is still there, in fair condition and being lived in.

In December of the same year, Dad moved the family, Mother, Ellen, sister Ella, and myself (Emma) to the homestead. I can remember that it was cold, with lots of snow.

Dad brought the Model-T Ford along, but travelling by car was almost nil then for there was only crooked trails, and in summer mud holes and stumps. The car became more or less an ornament.

Times were hard, but we managed to get by somehow, by milking cows and shipping cream, getting moose meat and our own garden produce.



Ella Myrland, Pete Myrland, Mrs. Myrland and Oscar Bjerklund.

MISHAP IN THE MUD

The mention of shipping cream brings to mind an amusing episode, at least to Ella at the time it happened. Mother and Ella were on their way to Wanham with the team and democrat and a can of cream. All went well until they got to the bottom of the Simpson Hill, (which it is sometimes called) south of Wanham. There were a few stumps still in the road as well as mud. With careful maneuvering one could miss, but Mom and Ella got hung up on one, breaking a single tree. Here they were stranded. Ella could ride, but Mother couldn't, and it was too far to walk. The only solution was to wait for help. Their situation struck Ella as funny, so she began to laugh. The more she laughed, the angrier Mother became, for this predicament was not funny to her. They didn't wait long for help. A man came along and, fortunately, had a spare single tree in his wagon so got them on their way with no further mishap.

In 1952 or '53 my parents decided that they would like to live closer to the hamlet of Wanham and still farm. My dad built a home on an acreage, where my parents resided until my father's death in May, 1961. Prior to this, he continued to farm his land until he was eighty-two years old. My mother moved to Pioneer Lodge in Grande Prairie a year later, and from there to a nursing home. She passed away in September, 1965.

I (Emma) married Arthur Peebles in December, 1929. Ella married Tom Brown of Spirit River, in 1939.



Pete Myrland's barn and some of his livestock.

Pete Myrland was never idle. He loved his hobby of wood-working. He carpentered well and built his own home and barn, as well as assisting others to do the same.

He also supervised the building of Central Hall. When a barn reached completion, a barn dance was often held in the loft. Such was the case at Myrlands. Since entertainment was rare, barn dances were always very well attended. Home-made ice-cream was often sold.

CARL NAGEL

Carl was born September 2, 1908, in the Bismark District, near Ponoka, Alberta. He received his schooling there and was a member of the Lutheran Church of that district. He grew up on the family farm, a place where everyone learned to do their share. There were seven children in the home. His mother passed away when he was nine and there were three children younger than he, so they learned to work hard at an early age.

In June, 1929, Carl came to the West Vale District to look over the prospects of settling here and taking a homestead. He soon did, No. S.W. 31-76-3-W6, cancelling Matt Vickland, and building a home at a later time on NE 25-76-4-W6 across the corner, west of the homestead.

Four Nagel brothers came to West Vale and took homesteads. Carl and Paul stayed, Henry and Will



At Left: Carl, Beth and Orma Nagel.



Right: Carl Nagel - 1969.

returned to the Ponoka District where they all had been raised.

A great deal of hard hand labour went into clearing land, as most men of that era can well testify. After awhile power machinery came and made land clearing a different story.

Carl did duty as a board member for the Rural Electrification Association of Peoria-Smokey West for eighteen years, and also served on the Birch Hills Gas Co-op board starting August, 1973. For a time he was secretary for the Kadot Lake Association. He was a member of the Birch Hills Senior Citizens and enjoyed visiting his friends there.

In the earlier days of our district, the young men held baseball games and Carl was very much a part of these. He enjoyed recalling the odd victory. All those young men worked very hard all day long and one wonders how they had any energy left over for play. At a much later time and for a new generation, he umpired softball games on occasion.

July 10, 1941, he married Elizabeth (Beth) Parlee who had come from Grayson, Saskatchewan, to the West Vale District in March of 1929, with her parents and other family members. Carl and Beth were blessed with a daughter some years later, Orma Joyce, now residing on the homeplace with her husband, Ken, and daughter, Connie.

Carl passed away January 4, 1978. He had been in ill health for more than a year. He was buried in the West Vale Cemetery.



The Ken Hansen Family. Left to Right: Ken, Orma and Connie.

THE PAUL NAGEL FAMILY

by Jean Lukas

On June 10, 1936, Rebecca (Becky) Murray Parlee and Paul William Nagel were married at the home of her parents, Elizabeth and William Parlee. Then they walked a mile south-west to their new home, on S.E. 25-76-4-W6th.

Their house was a one-roomed cabin, built earlier by Paul and his homesteading partner, Fred Birdsall.

Paul had been born and raised in the Bismark District, west of Ponoka, Alberta. He had filed on his homestead in April, 1928.

To change the status of the former little bachelors



Paul and Becky Nagel's Wedding - 1936.

cabin to a real home for a married couple, Paul and Becky strung a curtain across the centre of the floor, creating a two-roomed house. This remained their home until Walter George, the first child, was eight months old.

A large home nearby was built of spruce logs, brought from the hills two miles south of their farm. The same general area provided logs each winter for years, to be burned as firewood during the coming months. The log walls of the house were later covered with drop siding from Reiswig's mill. Sometimes during extremely cold winter nights we would hear a loud crack, like a rifle shot, and our parents would tell us that was caused by the frost contracting the logs.

About a year and a half after Paul, Becky, and their toddler Walter moved into the house, Verna Elizabeth was born. During each summer there was the constant chore of clearing more land for fields. It was done by hand and meant a lot of axe work. In the winter there was the important job of bringing home firewood, and with the last load of logs that arrived before Christmas, a floor-to-ceiling spruce tree would be smuggled home.

On the evening of December 24th, we hung our long brown stockings on the wooden footing of the chimney. Each of us tucked in a note for Santa Claus. We were careful to ask about his health and sent our best wishes to Mrs. Claus. In the final paragraph of our letter we would ask for specific treats to be put into our stocking. Santa always wrote a reply and asked us to forgive his uneven writing, explaining that his hands were cold and it was difficult for him to hold a pencil.

Christmas morning we four children dressed quickly in our best clothes and, when the wood fires had made it warm enough downstairs, we went there together.

The tree was beautiful! Mom and Dad had brought it in overnight and decorated it while we slept. One year we had real candles on the tree and, as a precaution against childish enthusiasm, Dad picked me up and held me while they were lit. The flickering little lights all over the tree, shining onto every one of us, created a magic memory which has remained throughout the years since then.

Two large log barns were built on our farm and other smaller buildings were added.

An ice house was made of grooved logs, with dovetailed corners, and it still stands on the homestead 40

years later. Inside the thick logs of the outer walls there was two feet of sawdust packed around an inner room of rough planking. During the winter, chunks of ice two feet square and more than a foot thick were cut and hauled, to completely fill the inner room. Loose sawdust was shovelled over the pile to provide additional insulation. The system worked so well that it provided ice throughout all the following summer.

Heavy wooden doors kept the inner ice-filled compartment, separate from a small outer room, where there were shelves for butter, milk and similar perishables.

Jean Anna, a second daughter, and Gordon Paul, the youngest child, arrived to complete the family.

Just before Walter started school in 1944, the West Vale School District No. 4423 moved its single classroom from an original log building (it is still standing and Becky had attended there when it opened in 1930) to a new frame structure built within a few months by Gus Dofher, a local carpenter, on the southeast corner of our farm. So Walter had only about a quarter of a mile to walk to school each day. The years quickly went by and soon all four of us were attending that school.

Because of a large slough along the range line between S.E. 25 and W. 30, the original north-south road through the district ran through our farmyard. It followed high ground to the north and later turned east again to join the true road allowance. About halfway along this detour was a small wooden bridge covered with many loose planks.

We had a large garden west of the house. Mom and Dad put a great deal of work into it and got more than enough vegetables to last until the garden was producing the following year. Potatoes and carrots were stored in long wooden bins in the cellar. Mom canned several hundred jars of smaller vegetables, fruit bought in town, and native berries like saskatoons, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries.

One spring when the ground had just thawed, Jean and Gordon attempted a short cut through the soft terrain of the large garden plot. Mom was alerted to the plight of the two youngsters when she heard wailing and found them, arms around each other, crying for help. She eventually tossed them a rope to pull them to the nearest dry ground and postponed the rescue of their left-behind overshoes until later.

Paul was a local trustee all the years that West Vale school was actively serving local students. For the first time, in 1951/52 West Vale was unable to hire a teacher, so the 16 or more students then attending took correspondence lessons. The supervisor left early in the spring to start her own family and so Mom became our 'teacher', until university classes concluded and we again got a new student teacher.

That September, there were strong feelings in our district when we learned that West Vale children and others from the nearby region would be taken by bus to a centralized school in Wanham. Each family had its own reaction to the plan, but ours was one of relief.

Walter already had spent most of one year at Spirit River, living in a dormitory, in order to complete grade nine, and Verna's belongings were being packed so that she could go too. Instead, in the fall of 1952, the school

bus began to take all four of us to classes in Wanham, and so our family could remain together for a little longer.

On July 13, 1959, Paul Nagel passed away suddenly at home, and was buried in the West Vale cemetery.

In August, 1960, Becky moved to Edmonton and took nursing aide training. After graduation she worked in the Royal Alexandra Hospital there. Gordon completed



The Nagel Children - 1946. Left to Right: Gordon, Jean, Verna and Walter.

grades 11 and 12 at Strathcona High School. In 1962, Becky bought a home in Grande Prairie and worked at the Municipal Hospital there until 1971. Then she moved to Red Deer and has been employed at Red Deer General Hospital since that time.

In July, 1962, Verna (then a high school teacher) married Clem Bernhardson, a psychology professor, and they live in Saskatoon with their children Steven and Laura.

In September, 1966, Gordon married Kathy McKenzie, a nurse, and they are now settled in Toronto, where he lectures in philosophy at the University of Toronto. They have two daughters, Rebecca and Jennifer.

In July, 1973, Walter married Carol Hogg, a Calgary journalist. They have a son, Tyler, and a daughter, Sylvia. Walter teaches journalism at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

In August, 1973, Jean, a registered nurse, married Leonard Lukas, and they farm and raise livestock near Sundre, Alberta. Their two children are Sandra and Carl.

THE FRODE NIELSEN FAMILY

by Elsie Nielsen

Frode was born in Hjørring, Denmark, in December, 1921. He came to Ponoka, Alberta, with his parents in May, 1922. Frode married Elsie Westman in 1941. Elsie was born at Brightview, Alberta. The Nielsens farmed at Ponoka 'till 1952, when Frode went to work for the Midland and Pacific Grain Co. and was stationed at Wanham. They had two sons; Robert born at Ponoka in 1945, and Delbert born in 1948.

Robert was in grade two when he came to Wanham. His first teacher was Grace Sather. After four years at Wanham he went to school in the following towns - Busby, Stony Plain, and Alliance. He completed his high school at Alliance. Robert then moved to Calgary to apprentice in sheet metal. He married Diane Simpson of

Castlegar, B.C., in 1967. They have a 2 year old daughter, Jennifer Donalle Ruth, and still live in Calgary. Robert is employed in the sheet metal industry and his favorite sport is curling.

Delbert started school at Wanham. His first teacher was Mrs. Zmean. Like Robert, he went to school at Busby, Stony Plain and Alliance. Delbert worked on construction for a few months after finishing school. He moved to Red Deer with us in 1967. He worked at several jobs in Red Deer for a year, and then entered N.A.I.T. in Edmonton to study telecommunications. He has since been employed by A.G.T. at the office in Edmonoton. Delbert married Margaret Finnigan of Red Deer in 1969. They have 2 children; Brent Ivan is 9 years old and Candice Elaine is 5 years old. Delbert and his family live in Sherwood Park. Delbert's favorite sport is hockey, which he still plays for recreation.

Frode bought grain in the following towns: Wanham, Busby, Stony Plain and Alliance. Resigning from the grain business in 1966, he moved to Red Deer in 1967 to work as a mechanic for the John Deere dealer, and is still employed there.

Elsie worked at several stores in Red Deer as a clerk and cashier. She has now retired and is taking life a little easier.

As always, our favourite recreation is dancing,-going dancing every Saturday night.

DANCING

One of the things that comes to mind about Wanham were the high school girls, always looking for a ride out to old Central Hall on Friday night. There is no doubt it was one of the best places to go for a good time!

One night we went to a show in Wanham. After the show we were sitting in Gaspards Cafe having coffee, when several girls came in and asked for a ride to a dance in Eaglesham. It was 11 o'clock and the boys were too small to stay home alone, so Elsie said she would stay home and I could drive the girls to Eaglesham. This they didn't agree with, so they tossed a coin and Elsie lost. We all left for Eaglesham with the temperature at 30° below. When we arrived at Eaglesham, the attendance was so small they were going to close the dance but the girls convinced them to keep playing and the dance was on 'till about 2:30 a.m. The main dance that night was the bunny hop. Elsie still remembers her aches and pains and sore muscles which she suffered the next few days. I don't remember which girls were with us that night. The girls that usually went with us were: Manzulenko, Prevost, Harrington, Sather and Quamme.

There is the old story of the Peace River mud ... Well, the first year we had the '53 Dodge, we found they were true as we got mired down twice - so bad that the wheels wouldn't turn! Once Eric Sevre towed us with his tractor 'till we were on gravel. The other time was down on the Smoky, and Mr. Fimrite brought us to town. John Krenzler got the car loosened up and brought it to town a couple of days later.

While living at Wanham in 1954, we bought a quarter of land from Art Bohnke - N.E. 35-76-4-W6th. We never farmed this land. We rented it to Lloyd Wendland,

Florian Baranac and Lester Olsen. We sold it to Darrel Hallock in 1970.

JOHN NOGA



John Noga at his home in Codesa in 1949.



John Noga breaking land in Codesa during the 30s.



Peter Noga watering horses. The water is from a snow well. The horses are drinking from a trough made by hollowing out the trunk of a tree. This was in the early 30s.



Peter Noga



John Noga harvesting in Codesa. The binder was probably brought from Manitoba in 1931 when the Noga family moved to the "the Peace".



Left to Right: Alice Bedulka, Jack Webster, Charlie Edey and Elsie Noga in a Bennett buggy. Heart Valley - 1933.

YESTERYEAR AT WANHAM

by Otto Nolde as told to Marjorie Fortney

I was born in a small village near Ragnit, Germany, on April 29, 1894. I spent most of my first 20 years on a 120 acre farm with my father.

In 1927, I arrived in this great country of Canada. After a short period of time at Lacombe, Alberta, I headed north to the promising Peace River Country. The date was May 1928. I took a homestead 7 miles south of Wanham (Northwest quarter of section 9, township 76).

That spring I cleared and broke ten acres. That was just a small beginning. Within the next five years I had sixty-five acres cleared. It was a lot of hard work and perspiration.

In 1932 I rented a half-section from Mr. Monroe. That year my share of the wheat was 1900 bushels, which I sold for .19¢ per bushel.

MAKING MONEY

I figured I would do better in cattle. Just before harvest that fall, I purchased sixty-two head of cattle for the sum

of nine hundred twenty dollars. It was a poor year for harvest and a lot of the grain was left in the field. I put the cattle out to pasture 'till late November. By this time they were in good shape for market. They filled four box cars. I received a cheque for the grand total of six hundred twenty dollars.

My neighbor, Mr. Stoner, asked me how I made out. I answered that I did just wonderful. I had many blessings to count. In the war I had to live like a badger, in a fox hole. Now I had a two-room shack on top of the ground.

I finally told him the truth. He tried to encourage me by saying that there was always next year.

"You may as well learn", he said, "this is a next year country."

He remarked that it must be cold in my shack. I assured him that most of the time it was the same temperature on the inside as the outside. We both laughed, as I explained about how many socks I wore, depending how far the temperature dropped. My shack didn't compare with the neat little log houses of the Scandinavian people.

I homesteaded here till 1940. At this time there was one hundred acres under cultivation. I sold this homestead and bought four hundred acres from Mr. Gulick. I sold one quarter of this land, and bought another quarter closer to the home place. There was two hundred eighty acres on this farm, under cultivation.

The year 1945 brought much joy into my life, for it was this year that I married Francisco Ebner. Our neighbours and friends put on a big do for us. The next few years were filled with my new role as husband and father. In 1960 we sold our farm, and the following year we bought a place in Wyndell, British Columbia.

Take me back to the Smokey River Valley,
There I on horseback like to roam.
Day after day to line up the cattle and horses
To get them safe on the Edmonton shore.
No setbacks or disappointments would ever me hinder
And no place on earth was so dear to my manhood
As the Smokey River District,
The place where I did roam.



Mr. and Mrs. Otto Nolde.

CLARENCE AND BETTY NORDVIE

Clarence and Betty Nordvie, with children Wayne and Judy, arrived in Belloy in the spring of 1950.

They homesteaded land five miles east of Belloy town where they farmed until 1974 when they moved to Grande Prairie.

Wayne resides in Grande Prairie with his wife Carol and daughters Michelle and Laurel.

Judy married Marty Oshanek and they live in Fox Creek with daughters Kimberly and Haley.

NOREN, JOHN

submitted by Ellen (Noren) Lee

My father, John Noren and my mother, Amanda Olson were married in Lamberton, Minnesota, U.S.A. in 1897. They were both originally from Sweden.

Four children were born into the Noren family while we lived in Lamberton: Ellen, Jalmar, William and Arthur.



Mr. and Mrs. John Noren - 1897.



The Noren Children. Left to Right: Ellen, Jalmar, Art and Willie.

LIGHTNING STRIKES

In 1903 we moved from Minnesota to our North Dakota homestead by covered wagon. What a trip that was with Jalmar three years old, Willie two, Art one, and me (Ellen) four years old. I well remember a bad thunder storm when lightning struck a telegraph pole near us, bringing the horses to their knees. They had drooping ears for at least two weeks and my dad felt the shock for a couple of weeks, too.

While we lived in North Dakota, twins Esther and Victor were born. Unfortunately, Victor passed away at three weeks of age. A fair haired baby boy, Walfred next joined our family.

On September 13th, 1909, sadness struck our home when we lost our mother.

Our school was very different from those my grandchildren attended. Our first school was a shack, with one long plank to sit on and another plank to write on.

In 1911, we moved to Simmie, Saskatchewan, and lived on Dad's homestead. This is where we children grew up. In 1920 we moved to Burns Lake, B.C. where Dad bought a quarter of land.

In 1925, Dad went to Heart Valley where he bought a half section of land - N.W. and S.E. 12-76-3-6 from Mr. F. Smith, a veteran. He thought the land at Heart Valley looked very fertile, so he contacted my brothers, sister and brother-in-law, and us to tell about the good land that could be homesteaded in this district. Dad filed by proxy for brothers Jalmar, Willie, Art and Walfred. He could not file on a homestead by proxy for anyone other than male blood relatives.

In 1928, Jalmar and Lillian, Walfred, Rowland and Esther, Sam and I came to Heart Valley to join Dad.

On July 22, 1929 we were saddened to lose Dad with a stroke. The Noren family members all lived in the Heart Valley District for many years. However as the years passed, several moved away from the community. How, not one of the Norens live on the original family farms. Willie still lives in Wanham. Esther and Lillian live at Ranfurly, Alberta, Sylvia lives at Lake Bennett, B.C. Laura, Walfred and Art passed away. I still live in Edmonton.

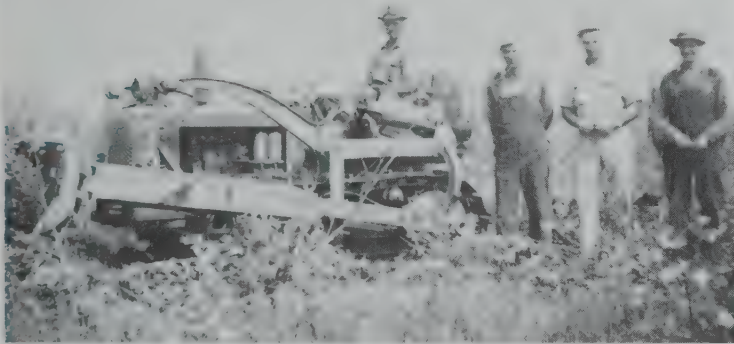


The Noren family. Left to Right: Esther (Butterwick) Ellen (Lee) Art, Jalmar, Walfred, Willie and John.

I have seen many changes in my lifetime - from travelling by covered wagon, to a Canadian Pacific Air flight for Sam and me in 1957, from Edmonton to Grande Prairie with our son-in-law, Boris Onisko. Last year Joyce, little Tony, Edith and I went to my North Dakota School Reunion. I even saw the rock piles I helped to build more than seventy years ago. What monuments!

MR. GUY NORTON

On August 12, 1969, Mr. Guy Norton of Wanham passed away aged 63 years. Guy homesteaded west of Wanham in 1927 and except for service in the Second World War, he has resided here continuously. He is survived by three sisters; Mary, who with her husband are here from England; Bessie and Annabelle also of England. Funeral services were held from the Wanham Hall Thursday, August 12 at 2:30 p.m. Reverend Gordon Williams officiated. Pallbearers were: Norman Tiernan, Taras Zamorsky, John Hawryluk, Leal Fowler, Delbert Wells and Norman Olson. Guy has been a resident here for many years. His familiar face and keen sense of humour will certainly be missed.



Clifford Tansem on Cat - Dee Moore, Guy Norton and Bernard Smith.

CORNELIUS OLSON

Our dad, Cornelius Olson, was born in Kragero, Norway, December 5th, 1887. His parents were Knut and Thorina Olson and he was the youngest of five children. His sisters were Anna, Bertha, Olga and Gustina and a brother Thorvald. Our dad was the only one in the family to leave Norway. The others stayed quite close to their birthplace.

Dad went to school in Kragero, and then to Seamen's school in Oslo, where he learned the art of cooking. In 1904, at the age of 17, he left Norway. He first worked as a cook on a cruiser. Later he went to New York and worked there till about 1913. He and his brother-in-law, Hans Mortensen, then left for Canada. Dad worked different places on his way here - on a farm in Saskatchewan, and also in a lumber camp. Living conditions in

the lumber camp were very primitive, but the food was good. They lived in cabins badly infested with lice. Laundry and washing facilities were almost unheard of, so clothes were worn as long as possible - then discarded and replaced with new ones. In Edmonton they boarded a construction train and travelled to Sawridge, on Lesser Slave Lake. They crossed the lake by boat, coming next to Grouard where they bought a team and wagon, which became their mode of travel for the rest of the trip. They got to Peace River, then to Dunvegan where they crossed by ferry. The road from there was very poor. It was intended only as a winter road, but it was then early May, so it was a slow hard trip.

SAVINGS GONE

During one of the river crossings in their travels, Dad's money belt became loose and was washed away. He lost his savings of \$400.00, a big loss at that time!

It was May, 1914, and they had reached their destination. Their first stop was on the south-east corner of the quarter that later became Eli Barrett's and also the site of the first school. They spent the night there. Then leaving their supplies and other belongings, they went by team and wagon to Grande Prairie. It took them three days. The roads were poor, narrow and full of stumps. If they met another team, they would have to find a wide place to pass or cut a wide place in the road. This meant they had to carry axe and saw. They had to pay \$10.00 to file on the land. Dad got the S.E. of 34-77-3-W6 and Hans the S.W. of 34-77-3-W6. They both farmed these same quarters 'till retirement. The land was not surveyed at this time, only the township lines marked. They had to step out the sections and were only fifteen feet out when it was officially surveyed.

COMFORTING

Dad built his first shack in 1914. It was made of poplar, as there was ample supply of this wood. It had two rooms, one for himself and the other for his oxen, which he got later. He said that during the long winter nights he enjoyed the sound of the oxen munching their hay and moving about.

His team of oxen were rather small compared to most others, and I guess because of this, they were lively and quick stepping. One was brown, the other a roan color. He teamed this oxen with a pair of white horses to do his breaking.

The first winter there were only four men in the area; Emil and Martin Bode, Hans and Dad. The Bode brothers spent the first winter in Hans' shack, and Hans spent the first winter with Dad.

Spirit River was the nearest post office and grocery supply, 'till a little later when Wanham had its own. The roads were so poor to Spirit River it was quicker to walk and pack groceries home on his back, than to go by team.

The first school was built in 1918. Dad had a part in this and also in the building of the first hall. He was also one of the shareholders in the hall.

In 1920 Dad decided to build a house. This building site is still used and was on the east side of the creek,



Cornelius and Jenny Olson - 1930.

instead of the west side, where he built his first shack. This house was very sturdily built, and today, over sixty years later, it is still standing though not used as a home.

THIRSTY

Dad told this story of the early 1920's when, having no milk cows of his own, he got thirsty for some milk. He went and milked himself a jugful from the neighbors cows on the next quarter. He laughed when he thought of Mr. and Mrs. Munroe wondering why their cows were giving less milk that morning!

In 1922 he rented out his farm and returned to Norway for Christmas. He stayed for a little more than a year and came back to Canada in the spring of 1924. The fellow who had rented the farm had used one room of the house as a granary, so Dad had quite a mess to clean up when he got back!

Dad and Mom met during his time back in Norway, so from here Mom will tell her story.

MRS. JENNY (CORNELIUS) OLSON

I was born on December 6th, 1897 in Kragero, Norway. My parents were Kristian and Maren Thorsen, who raised a big family - thirteen in all. I have many happy memories of growing up with my brothers and sisters. I went to school in a small country schoolhouse a few months of the year and quit at the age of thirteen to be Mother's 'helper'. This caused me some tears. We learned to work, but also had our free times which we made good use of - swimming, sailing and fishing in summer, and skiing and skating in winter. It was a happy life, but also with sorrows as two of my sisters died young.

1923 was a big year for me. That's when I met Cornelius Olson. He asked me to have lunch with him, and

that was it! When he went to Canada, we kept up a busy correspondence between the two countries until the 26th of June, 1930, when I started on my way to meet that tall Canadian again in person. I sailed on the Norwegian-American ocean liner BERGENSFJORD. On the nine day trip from Oslo to Halifax, we endured some rough weather and many people were seasick, but to me it was an enjoyable time. Everything on board ship was the very best.

IMMIGRATION PRISON

We arrived in Halifax on the 5th of July. My first impression of Canada was not the best. In the first place, the immigration officer was rude, and several of us were herded into a big room with iron bars on the windows. The dust was inches thick behind a table that was bolted down. Cots lined the walls, each with a grey blanket and a pillow. Nothing was very clean. The washroom had some runny, green soap, but no towels of any kind. There before us were many young girls of different nationalities. A big dark skinned man turned the key on the outside, and we were prisoners. We didn't know why we were kept in there, as there were no interpreters to explain things to us.

On the third day, word came from Mr. Pete Tansem, postmaster in Wanham, that Cornelius Olson lived there, was dependable and I would have someone to go to. I was allowed to leave.

It took five days to get to Edmonton. Some of the trains were so slow and dirty, with coal dust all over. We sat and slept in the same clothes all that time. We must have been a sorry looking bunch when we arrived in Edmonton!

Cornelius met me there. It was the 14th of July. After a bath, clean clothes and a good meal, we went to a Justice of the Peace office and were married.

The next day we arrived in Wanham and went out to the farm, my new home, and a new way of life. I found my new neighbors very kind and helpful, sharing whatever they had, and teaching me new things.

NEIGHBORS

Among the many helpful neighbors I can think of, I must mention the Murphy family, Mr. and Mrs. Fred



The Olson family. Left to Right: Knut, Cornelius, Jenny, Norman, Ella, Betty and Gordon.

Murphy and their five children. Mrs. Murphy was a cheerful and capable lady. She managed their farm so well. (Her husband was away from home so much.) Her family was well cared for, and her garden was something to see! Out of it she canned and preserved enough for her family, and always had something to give away besides.

In those days there wasn't always a doctor or nurse to call when a baby was due. Then it was Mrs. Murphy who would welcome the new one. If needed, she would make clothes for the baby, too. Mrs. Murphy sent our children many a bag of fruit and candy at Christmas. Shirley, their youngest, tried so hard to teach me English when I first came. She didn't give up until I had repeated the words after her. Mollie (Murphy) Tansem and her husband, Clifford, did their good deeds, too, not worrying about being recognized for them. Cornelius was one of the lucky bachelors to have been invited to the Murphy's for Christmas, before I came. Cliff and Mollie carried on this tradition, too.

HARD TIMES IN A HARD COUNTRY

In the winter of 1932, we heard about the chase and killing of Albert Johnson, the 'Mad Trapper of the North.' Though we sympathized with him, we fully realized that he had killed a policeman and that it could be no other way.

About the same time one of our neighbors, Martin Bode, got word that his brother, Emil had been found murdered along with his partner, in their cabin. A third man who had lived near here in the early days was found dead up north, also. All of it settled like a gloom over us; a hard country and hard times.

During these years farm produce was worthless. No. 1 wheat was 27 cents a bushel. Shipping a cow, we owed four dollars for freight. It was worse for farmers who didn't have livestock and had to depend on moose for meat. There was no work to be had. Young people, both girls and boys, started riding the freight trains to other places trying to find jobs, and getting none. They were told to go back where they came from. Those who applied for assistance maybe got some, but so very little.

There were many bachelors in the district and as time went by, we heard of first one, then another who was found dead in his shack. They lived alone, and died alone! Police saw to it that they were buried. There were no homes for old people, or pensions to keep them in food.

In 1933 Martin Bode, one of our close neighbors, sold his farm to Clifford and Mollie Tansem. He built a scow at Dunvegan, loaded all their belongings and went down the Peace River to Yellowknife. Some time later Charlie Hansen, a young Dane, went north, too. Being a Dane he would make a good gardener; and he did make good. He married a native girl, raised a family and bought a nice car. Later, he took his family and car back to Denmark for a visit, and returned to settle in Edmonton.

The first four of our children were born at home. Knut, the oldest was born June 2, 1931, with a young nurse, Miss Smith, as midwife. Ella was born November 23, 1932, with Dr. Margaret Owen assisting. Norman arrived June 23, 1934, with Dr. Emmy Johnstone

present, and she was there when Betty was born also, November 1, 1935. Gordon was born July 1, 1940, with Dr. Carlisle in attendance.



Ella's Wedding Day. Left to Right: Mr. and Mrs. Schenk, Francis, Ella, Jenny and Cornelius.

DR. EMMY JOHNSTONE

Dr. Emmy Johnstone was English. She was born in India where her father was an officer in the English army. She spent her young days in England, where she got her training, as well as some time in Germany. After practising awhile in London, she came to Canada sponsored by the Canadian government, to work as a doctor in outlying districts. She spent quite a long time in Wanham, and shared the lean years with the rest of us. She did much to help, in so many ways. She delivered babies and attended those who were sick, often travelling long distances with horses and sleigh or buggy. Sometimes the weather was very cold and she would spend the night with her patient, coming home the next day to her small house to find her food and water frozen solid. She would then have to get a fire going in her wood stove and thaw things out.

She spent her final years in Edmonton, serving others to the last. She passed away at the age of ninety-four years.

Cornelius bought our first car in 1935, a Model-A Ford. It was quite a difference from travelling with horses and wagon, but it wasn't always a pleasure. It happened sometimes that we would return from someplace to find our road deep in mud that no car could go through, not even the Model-A! Then we had to walk home with the children and all, wet and muddy, with aching arms and torn stockings! The rose bushes were plentiful. So much like the road of life; some bright spots, some not so bright; but all in all, a good life!

MY LIFE IN THE PEACE

by George Martin Olsen

As I sat at the table in our room at a motel near Rutland, B.C., watching the very busy traffic as it rushed to and fro along Highway 97, I noticed a transport carrying groceries from Vancouver to various distant points. I idly wondered if perhaps it would deposit some

of its ware in Grande Prairie, Alberta, and maybe even in my home town of Wanham, which is situated just fifty miles north of that city. A pang of homesickness twisted within me.

Although my wife and I had spent the last several weeks in the warmer climate of the Okanagan Valley, my thoughts turned again to the Peace River country and my home there. I realized that despite the periods of hardship that had been our lot while homesteading there, it was still a very dear place to me, and would always be 'home!'

Our family, which consisted of my parents, two brothers, a sister and myself, first heard of the Peace while living on a rented farm six miles west of Leslieville, Alberta. My parents had emigrated from Sweden to the United States, and later to Canada. During our four years at Leslieville our crops had frozen, hailed out, or were snowed under. Added to this was the fact that it was here my eldest sister had passed away, so we were seriously thinking of making a move.

About that time, an old friend of Dad's, Peter Myrland said that he was going to the Peace River country to look for a homestead, and wondered if Dad wanted to go with him. Dad didn't have the money to go, but as I had been taking care of a bachelor's place during the winter while he was cutting ties, I had saved a little. Between us, we had enough, so he and Mr. Myrland headed for the north. They chose homesteads across the road from each other, seven miles south of Wanham.

When Dad came back, he was very enthusiastic about homesteading. This was the spring of 1928, and we decided to move immediately rather than chance another crop failure.



Marius and Emma Olsen with Lily, two weeks after her emergency appendectomy in 1929.

This was to be a great adventure for all of us, so we eagerly helped load the box car with our few belongings, plus six cows, a calf and four horses.

We got special rates on this car as the railway gave a 'cut' to settlers starting up in a new district. (Guess they knew they would get it back from us on our freight rates, and of course they did, many times over.)

It was evening when we got the box car loaded. We had

the cattle and horses in one end, the hay and some machinery and household effects in the other.

STOW-AWAYS

There wasn't enough money for my brothers and me to ride in the passenger train, so we fixed up a small room about six feet square out of baled hay at one end of the box car for us to hide and sleep in. Dad was allowed to travel with his stock. Mother and Lily stayed with a neighbor for a few days, thus giving us a chance to find a place to stay in while we would build a shack on the homestead. We had our supper that first night in the car, then we fed the stock for the night, hoping all the while that the train would soon come and pick up our car so we could be on our way.

About eight o'clock that evening we heard a train whistle, and before long there was a bang as the train backed into our car and coupled it on the rest of the train. With a clang and a releasing of squealing brakes, we began to move. We were all very excited and it was quite late before we boys crawled back into our little house of hay, putting a bale in the doorway so we wouldn't be seen in case the mounties were looking for bums (which we were) riding the freight.

We were speeding through the night at what seemed a terrific pace, and we got to Dunvegan yards on the north side of Edmonton in the early hours of the next morning. We wanted to look out, but Dad didn't dare let us, in case a yardman spotted us. We stayed hidden for three whole days and nights. We didn't know why we had to wait. We were getting very tired and anxious to get to our destination.

Sometimes there would be a crash on our end of the car and we thought we were away, but found out later that they were just shunting us around to make up a special train of settlers effects. Finally on the third day we began to move. There were 72 cars in our train, and all were filled with the property of settlers going into the mighty Peace River country. At Westlock the train stopped and two mounties looked in the door and asked if there was anyone riding the car besides Dad. Dad said, "Come in and see for yourself."

This seemed to satisfy them and they went on their way. We boys were sitting very still in our little hay house, shivering in our boots, and were very relieved when they were gone.

The train started again, with a series of bangs and squeals. We were travelling along at about forty or fifty miles per hour, when all of a sudden there was a crash and the train came to a shuddering stop! I remember the lantern fell to the floor, some of the water in the stock barrel spilled out, and part of our hay house caved in.

It turned out that the second car ahead of ours had left the track and had torn up several yards of track and ties. By some strange coincidence, the car was still upright. We wondered if we would ever get to our homestead. So far, we had already spent five days and nights to go 300 miles. We had to wait for nearly half a day while the railroad crew replaced the ties and got the car back on the track. We had no more trouble, and got to Smith about

ten o'clock that night. We stayed there until morning, since this was the divisional point on the railroad, and we got a different locomotive and crew to start out from there.

At the Smokey River our train was divided in half and two engines were used on each half to get it up the hill. This took several more hours. When the whole train was on top of the Smokey hill, and the halves joined together again, we took off once more. From here on we went slowly, since the load was heavy and the tracks so poor that any speed might put us off the track again. Dad told us we need not hide any more, as we were quite close to our destination and would not have to fear being seen.

WANHAM!

"I can see the station at Wanham!"

And there it stood, an old discarded railway car with the name 'WANHAM' painted across the end of it. We were very glad when the train was finally spotted at the siding. We had spent nearly a week in our box car, living only on lunches, and added to that was the fact our hay house had been nearly all eaten up by the stock.

As we emerged from our car, all we could see was the station and a forest of green spruce and poplar trees. I said to Dad, "Is this all there is to Wanham?"

"No," he said, "Town is half a mile south of the station." As we were talking, a man came up and introduced himself as Peter Tansem, the local merchant. He invited us to his house for supper. We certainly appreciated this offer, after living on lunches so long, and gladly accepted.

The road to town was only a trail through the trees, interspersed with mud holes. He had to detour around these. Some places were corduroy, in others you walked on logs around the puddles. The air was filled with mosquitoes. We broke into a clearing, and we saw the 'town'. It consisted of a small store surrounded by a few shacks.

Mr. Tansem led the way to his home. It was made of logs and was quite comfortable. He introduced us to his wife, Minnie and daughter Gladys, and told us to take a seat at the table. The food smelled heavenly and we partook of an excellent home-cooked meal. I am sure the Tansems thought that we boys were nearly starved, but it was one meal I don't think I shall ever forget, and a finer welcome no one could have given us.

\$18

We thanked the Tansems and went back to the box car to feed the stock. We were about to go to bed when Dad discovered that he had lost his pocket book. It contained all the money we had - all \$18.00 of it!

I can well imagine Dad's feelings. Here he was in a new country, among strangers, without a penny to his name! He thought and thought, finally coming to the conclusion that it must have been lost in the box car. We searched it from end to end, and there, among the straw and litter, it was found. Dad straightened up with it in his hand, and with a sigh of relief exclaimed, "Now we have a new lease on life, boys."



Lester, Lily, Clifford and George Olsen.

That night we had to make a smudge and keep it in the door of the box car to protect us, as well as the stock from the huge swarms of mosquitoes.

Next morning, Dad's friend, Mr. Myrland and the Sather boys, (also former acquaintances settling in the Peace.) came to help us make short work of unloading our possessions.

We were able to rent a quarter section of land from Mr. Tansem's brother, Louis, about one and a half miles from town. It had a house on it, so when Mother and Lily came on the passenger train a couple of days later, we were all together once more.

Brother Lester was the horse man in our family, so he was elected to get the land on our rented place ready for seeding. There were only fifteen acres under cultivation, but we hoped to raise enough feed for our stock for the following winter.

Mother packed enough food into packsacks for several days, and Dad, Cliff and I started walking out to our homestead, seven miles away. We walked because we only had four horses, and Lester needed these to put in the crop. Our job was to prepare a place on the homestead for all of us to live in.

We followed a trail for seven miles through hills covered with forests. It was really beautiful early in the morning, with the birds singing and the warm spring breezes blowing. We were expecting to see moose, deer or bear as there was lots of sign, but we were not thus rewarded.

HADES

After walking for what seemed hours, we came out of the timber and came upon thousands of acres of burnt over bush, with thousands of blackened snags everywhere.

"Well boys," Dad said, "About a mile straight ahead on the right side of the trail is our homestead, just across from that log house you see. It belongs to Mr. Myrland."

I've had visions of what Hades would be like and almost felt that this must be it! The wind made horrible sounds, blowing through the blackened branches and snags. I couldn't help but exclaim, "Let's go back home! This is awful!"

"We'll make it nice in time," Dad said. "And in any case, we haven't the money to go back, so we'll make the

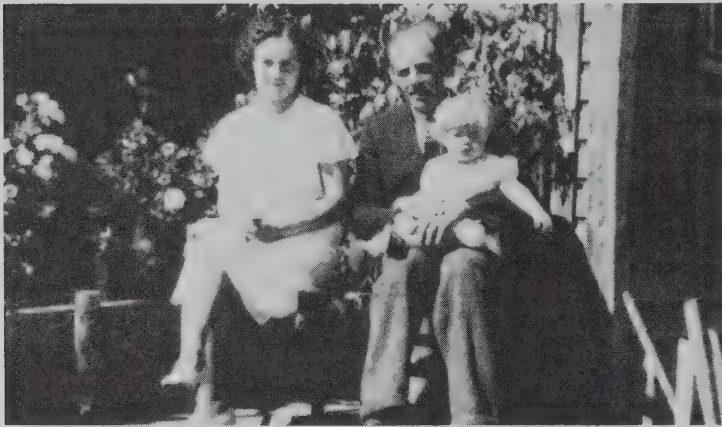
best of it.”

We arrived at the Myrlands about noon, and had dinner with them. This consisted of moose meat, spuds and fresh bread with homemade butter. Did that ever taste good, for we were ravenous after our walk. The Myrlands offered us the use of a granary to stay in, while we built our own homestead shack.

We decided to build on a small hill a ways in on our homestead, and cleared a trail to this site.

Mr. Myrland and the Sather boys assisted us in getting material from the timber to build our house and barn. We knew there would be lots of feed for the stock, as there was lots of grass and pea vine. We walked to the homestead every Monday morning and back to the rented place every Saturday night, until Lester had the crop in and we had a place ready to live in. Finally this was accomplished, and one morning we loaded as much as we could on the wagon and hayrack and hitched our four horses to it. We boys chased the cattle behind.

The going, after the first two miles, was very slow as there was only a trail to follow. This was pitted with deep



Bertha, George and Shirley Olsen.

mud holes and interspersed with stumps. Dad’s comment used to be, “The only dry spot on this road is on top of the stumps!”

We had to cut down several trees, as the road was too narrow to go through with the hay rack. We were indeed tired as we reached our new home. We let the stock feed on the bush grass, and Mother made supper over a campfire. Then we put the cows in the new barn and milked them, put the horses in a small pasture we had made, and built a smudge to keep the mosquitoes off them.

That night Dad said, “Well, here we are at last in our new home, and it’s wonderful to know that it’s ours!”

Mother agreed with him, and even the rest of us felt more enthusiastic about our new venture. That night we all went to bed satisfied that after years of rented farms, we at last had a place to call our own, even if there were acres of burnt snags to mar the landscape.

We spent that first summer clearing, breaking and fencing and making the shack warmer for the winter.

Our hands used to crack and bleed from handling the charred logs and were so sore that it was hard to continue clearing. One neighbor advised us to put soft pitch from

green spruce in the cracks. We tried this, filling sores with as much pitch as we could. This did relieve us somewhat, but our hands still got quite sore.

That year, as she would for many years to come, our mother made butter, as we traded this at the store for our groceries. She also carded and spun wool, and made socks and mitts for all of us. If it hadn’t been for her, it would have been much harder to make a go of it.

We didn’t have many vegetables that first year since our garden had frozen down a couple of times during the summer, so I was elected to hunt for wild meat. That winter I shot seven moose. Some of our neighbors had no guns, others had no shells. Since there was very little money about, the neighbors went together and supplied me with shells, and in this way, I was able to procure enough for us all.

MOOSEMEAT AND BEANS

I’ll never forget that winter! There was hardly any snow and it wasn’t too cold, but the spuds ran out before Christmas, and we lived on moosemeat and beans for the rest of the winter. It took many years before I could look at a pot of beans without shuddering.

That year most of the land was taken up. A great deal of it was homesteaded by bachelors. Many times we would see a new shack appear, with a wisp of smoke arising from its chimney early each morning. Often we saw these same men with packsacks on their backs, walking to Wanham to get groceries, mail and building materials such as nails, glass, hinges, etc.

I remember during the early years that a dance was being held one night in Wanham. I asked Dad if I could go. He told me I could, but he had no money to pay for my admission. A neighbor boy and I decided to go anyway and just watch the dancers. So we rode the seven miles on horseback. It was just as well that we were there as spectators, for there were thirty-five men and only two girls! Though neither girl would have been likely to win a beauty contest, they were grinning from ear to ear, for they were very much in demand.

In the years that followed, a lot more families came to settle. Roads were built, districts formed, and school houses erected.

I remember one day, that second summer, a picnic was to be held at one of the schools, with a dance to follow in the evening. Dad and I were fencing along the road allowance when two of the neighbor girls were walking by, on their way to the picnic. They stopped and asked if I was going. I told them no, because I had to work. The real reason was I didn’t have a nickel, and neither did Dad. I managed to borrow a pair of shoes and fifty cents from a bachelor neighbor, and went to the dance. We had lots of fun, as there were many girls in the district by then.

APPENDICITIS

Nothing too serious happened until the third or fourth summer when my sister, Lily, who was such a little thing, got appendicitis. We got a man from Wanham who owned an old Model-A Ford coupe to take her, our

mother and the district nurse to the hospital in Grande Prairie, a distance of eighty-five miles in the round-about way we had to go in those days. Her appendix ruptured, and we were very much afraid we would lose her, but she pulled through and was home again within two weeks.

As time went on, we got more land broken, and Lester and I got homesteads of our own. Dad and I hauled green logs from the timber a few miles away, for my log house. I peeled them, and got one of the neighbors, who was good at grooving logs, to help me build. We got long grey moss from a near-by slough and chinked the cracks.

When the house was finished, it looked quite good with its peeled logs and tar-paper roof. It had an aluminum roof - jack and black stove pipes. It was cozy, as the smoke drifted lazily upwards.

TIME TO QUIT

Later, Lester and Clifford were helping me to clear land for a few days. One night it rained and it was still drizzling the next morning. The boys wanted to go home, but I said, "Let's wait awhile, it might clear up and we can work for a few more hours and go home in the evening. The boys went out to take care of the horses. I laid down on the bed and went to sleep. All of a sudden, I awoke to find that I was soaking wet! I glanced up and found that the roof was leaking right above the bed. I hurriedly got the dishpan out and placed it on the bed under the drip.

When the boys came in, I told them what had happened, ending with, "That does it! Let's go home."

They quickly agreed, and in no time had the horses hitched to the wagon and we were away. It was not until a few days later that I found out the boys had quietly climbed up on the roof, while I was sleeping, and emptied a can of water through a hole which they had torn in the tarpaper directly over my bed! Had I known it at the time, I would have been furious, but as I didn't find out for a few days, I too, had to laugh about what they had done.

Homesteading was hard work, but we also had fun. We used to have surprise parties on the neighbors, and we would play games and dance while our folks sat and visited. There were also skating parties on Kadot Lake. Other entertainment increased as settlers continued to arrive.

Materially, it was very discouraging, for oats sold from four to ten cents a bushel, wheat was twenty cents, and barley priced accordingly. A full-grown shipping pig sold for \$2.50, and \$3.00, and a real nice yearling steer was \$18.00 to \$22.00. Of course you could buy a steak so big you couldn't see the plate for twenty-five cents at the cafe!

Clifford and Lily rode two and a half miles to school on horseback in the spring and fall. In the winter they travelled in a cutter that I had constructed.

The years brought changes in our lives. I married one of the neighbor girls, Bertha Triebwasser, whose family had come from Beiseker to settle in our valley, and Lily married the youngest Sather boy, Elmer. Clifford didn't like life on the homestead and went to Montana, where

he stayed with our uncle and learned the carpentry trade. He met a girl there and they were married. Later he joined the American Air Force, and went overseas to Italy until the war was over. He now lives in Cody, Wyoming, the home of the famous 'Buffalo Bill Cody.'

Lester, although he never married, increased his holdings extensively and became the best farmer of us all. Our parents are now both gone.

HOME

In a week or so, the wife and I will be wending our way home to see our children and grandchildren, also to clean grain and get the fields ready to sow.

During the winter when the snow is sifting by our doorstep and the mercury drops to 40 degrees below zero, we like to spend a few weeks near the home of the famous Ogopogo. With the first sign of spring, there is only one place we want to be - and that is on our homestead, in the heart of the Mighty Peace.

THE ORMISTONS

submitted by Norman Ormiston

On April 5, 1928, my brother, Willie, commonly known as Bill Ormiston, our cousin, Ed Bobier, Harry Moss and I, N.S. Ormiston, disembarked from the E.D. and B.C. RR train at Rahab, now known as Codesa, Alberta. We had met Harry only a few days earlier on the C.N.R. as we travelled from Tantallon, Saskatchewan, to Edmonton.

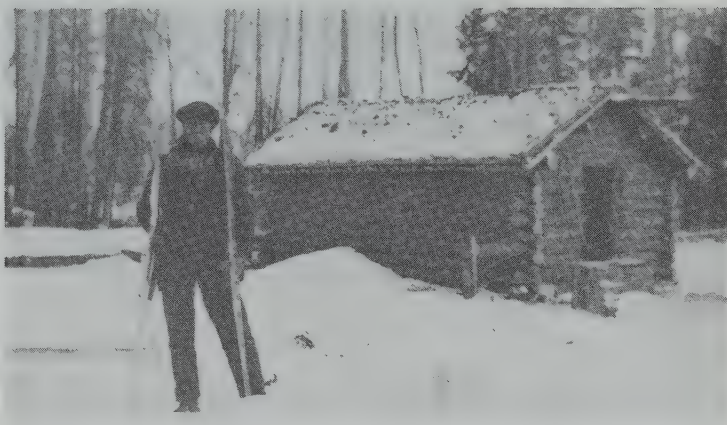
R.L. Soquet had been recommended as the man to show us homestead land, so we walked south five or six miles in the mud and slush to meet him. Each of us filed on one quarter section of land. Harry, Bill and I abandoned these quarters in the spring of 1929 and moved to East Peoria, where we squatted on the land that became our homes for many years. After the survey, my home quarter was described as N.E. 21-76-1-6.

Charlie Gummerson and Jim Sutherland became our neighbors in the same year of 1929, having also squatted on land nearby. Jim and his family later moved to Baytree. In 1930, John Peterson, his son, Gus, and John Arnsted moved into our area. John Arnsted stayed only one winter. These folks I will leave now, to their own stories, excepting Charlie Gummerson, who remained our close neighbor for many years.

CHARLIE GUMMERSON

Charlie bought the first Delco light plant into the Peoria District. It was later purchased by Peter Tansem to provide electricity to his store in Wanham. In addition to farming, Charlie worked as a lineman with the Dominion Government survey crew. He brought the first combine into the district in about 1944. In later years, Charlie moved to the town of Wanham, and now lies buried in the Wanham cemetery.

In 1933 our dad, mother and sister, Maggie left Saskatchewan to join us in East Peoria. Dad passed away in 1934, and Mother in 1935. They were buried in the



Charlie Gummerson beside Ormiston's bunk house in the Smokey District in 1933.

Belloy cemetery where Willie and Maggie, (Mrs. Wilfred Laughland) are now also buried.

Ed Bobier, our cousin, passed away several years ago, and is buried at Eaglesham.

My brother, Willie, and I shared work, machinery and tools for almost half a century of farming in this area. The accompanying snapshots show the horse-drawn outfits we used from 1935 to 1941. We suspended farming operations to serve four and one-half years in the army, during the second world war. Willie served in



Dominion Government Survey Crew. Charlie Gummerson holding the red and white marker.

North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and Holland as a cook. My service was in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany as a blacksmith.

In December 1953, Jeanne Bair (nee Beamer) and I were married in Seattle, Washington, with Chris and Julie making up a package deal. Terri came along in 1954, to make our family complete. We have lived in several places, but still have the homestead I squatted on forty-nine years ago. During that time the bush and mud have been replaced by fields of grain and good hard-top and gravel roads.

Chris and Julie's father, Julian Bair, first proposed the idea of clearing land for veterans in the Peace River country in 1945. This was later put into effect in the area north of Wanham, the work contracted by Lassiter and others.

Our three children all attended school at Wanham for a time. Chris and his family are doing well in Alaska. Julie and her son, Colin are in Florida. Terri works in Alberta and attends college in Kelowna, at intervals.

We have two fine grandsons, Colin Porter, nine years old of Florida, and Theron Bair, one year old, of Alaska.

Jeanne is settled in as a sweet old Granny.

I'd better duck now!

LEONARD B. ORTON AND FAMILY

Leonard Orton was born in the Bronx, New York, September 7, 1881. He worked in various states, in Seattle, Washington where Mrs. Taft, his sister lives.

He started his journey west in Minnesota, with the Sorenson brothers. He entered Canada in 1914, got off at Edson, the end of the track at this time. He continued his journey with Hans Sorenson to Grande Prairie, carrying an eighty lb. pack. They came past Sturgeon Lake on their journey, and encountered a mad dog. They had to smash the dog's skull with their axe. The Indians in the area pursued them, but they must have outrun the horses. Reaching Grande Prairie, Leonard went out to Buffalo Lakes to get a job as a book-keeper.

GOOD TIMES AND BAD

On his return, he married Hans Sorenson's sister who was living in Sexsmith. (She was from Norway.) Signa and Leonard were married November 5, 1927. They made their home in Sexsmith, where he worked as a grain buyer for United Grain Growers. He held the job there for seven years. His only son, John was born in January, 1929. John was placed in the window so the Indians could marvel at his 'cotton' hair.

Mr. Orton moved to Spirit River in 1930. He was blessed with the first white twins born in Spirit River. They were Myrtha and Anne, born on September 18, 1930. Their youngest daughter, Neva, was born on November 6, 1932.

The next year their log house burned down. It was totally destroyed. They had to move in with Hans Sorenson for a year.

In 1934, Signa filed on a homestead, its location - S.W. 12-76-2-6. They built a log house there in 1934, and moved there to live in 1935. The homestead was located in the Peoria District, where the Bad Heart and Smokey Rivers meet. In 1939, they left the homestead so the children could receive schooling in Peoria. In 1941, Mr. Orton worked for the United States army as a storekeeper in White Horse, until the death of his wife in April, 1944.

In 1945, Mr. Orton filed on the northwest quarter right beside the homestead. The children learned how to hunt young, before they were ten years old. His son still returns to Peoria every hunting season to hunt big game.

John started working for several farmers in the Peoria District, as a hired hand. He started homesteading, taking a half section for himself when he was twenty - W 1/2 36-76-2-6.

Mr. Leonard Orton continued to farm until 1956. He sold his property to his son and youngest daughter. They

later sold it to Irving Reiswig, the present owner, in about 1959.

Mr. Orton later moved to Edmonton and lived there until his passing on January 17, 1977, at the age of ninety-five. He was laid to rest beside his wife in the Seventh Day Adventist West Cemetery.

His children live in various prairie provinces. John married Elise Renz, presently living in Edmonton with one daughter; Anne (wife of Rev. Ray Kroker) presently living in Ninette, Manitoba with six sons and four daughters; Myrtha, Mrs. Vern Hulm, presently living in Winnipeg, Manitoba with one daughter; and Neva, Mrs. Leo Freund, presently living in St. Albert, with three daughters.

D.W. PALMER

by H.J. Rieger

Dennis Palmer immigrated to Canada from Rutland, England, in 1926. He worked on farms and ranches in the High River area of Alberta.

In 1940 he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Corps of Engineers and served in England and western Europe.

He arrived on the Lassiter Project in early April, 1949, after fording the Burnt River with a Model-D John Deere tractor. Halfway across the river the water 'killed' the engine and the tractor had to be towed ashore and dried out.

LASSITER PICNIC AREA

Denny is remembered along with Gordon Cosford, for originating the plans to make a picnic area on the north side of the Burnt River, just east of the Lassiter Bridge. The trees, rocks, and ground were leveled with horses and a good turnout of volunteer workers. A picnic booth and a softball diamond backstop were made of slabs. The homesteaders enjoyed several picnics and ball games there. It is often used as a camping ground now. Hopefully it will one day be the headquarters of a provincial park and game preserve.

Denny retired from his homestead in 1976, to live in Wanham.

THE PARLEE CONTINGENT

submitted by Sam Parlee

Out of a family of thirteen, who were all raised on a prairie farm at Grayson in southeast Saskatchewan, I was number eight.

With the exception of three sisters, who have visited the Peace a number of times, we have all lived here including our parents.

On February 14th, 1928, I drove a land-seeking party of five to the railway station at Cana, Saskatchewan, with a team and sleighs. The party consisted of my dad (the late William Parlee), my brother Wilfred, my cousin Ernie, Dave Funk and a man named George Plosz.

Mr. Funk had been to the Peace in the fall, and had filed on a homestead a half mile east of where the log school in West Vale stands. My dad had encouraged him to make a special trip back to the Wanham area from his



William Parlee and his wife, Elizabeth, with Eunice and Pauline in 1902. They homesteaded at Grayson, Saskatchewan at the turn of the century. In 1928 they filed on a homestead in what later became the West Vale district.

home at Neudorf, Saskatchewan, just to have him spy out the land that was available.

They met Jim Munro, who was batching that winter with Noble Johnston. Jim knew the lay of the land and where the corner stakes could be found, so he showed the men the land that was open for homesteading.

Wilfred filed on the land where the West Vale store and post office were eventually built by my brother, Buck. My dad bought a quarter from the Hudson Bay Company, and filed by proxy for my brother, Bob to the north of Dave's. Bob lost his place through cancellation. Dad also filed in July on the remaining quarter of that section, when he became eligible for a second homestead. (He had homesteaded at Grayson in 1902, when the province of Saskatchewan was still N.W.T.)

In June, Wilfred brought out a carload of settler's effects from Saskatchewan, and Dave came out in August, to help with the clearing and breaking. They also built a house and a hip-roofed barn. In threshing time, Dave worked for Charlie Gellar. (Hans Mortenson and Charlie Gellar operated a threshing outfit) and later that fall, he worked for Duncan Cameron, who lived on the place where the original South Slope School stood.

TOO YOUNG TO BITE

On March 12, 1929, my brother Tom and I drove my dad and mother, with four of my sisters and my brother, Buck to the train at Cana. We had two sets of sleighs as they had a lot of freight and large trucks. Tom and I remained on the home farm in Saskatchewan and put in the crop in order to leave the others free to homestead. We were too young at the time to bite into the ten dollar pie!

Dave and Wilfred met the train at Wanham and drove the folks out as far as Funk's place, where Mrs. Funk had a beautiful dinner awaiting them.

MOTHER DRIED HER TEARS

Mother was a brave little woman who could stook or

pitch bundles, or break an ornery cow in for milking, but she wept when she beheld the wilderness that was to be her home for the next thirty years.

The fire had gone through the area some years earlier. Black stumps towered on either side of the trail. Deadfall lay criss-cross for miles, and here and there a few straggly poplars still remained standing - some dead, some green, some turned up by the roots.

To one who had spent twenty-six years helping to develop a beautiful farm and home, the new landscape must indeed have looked pretty wild. Mother must have resolved to dry her tears, for we never heard her complain. She helped to pick sticks, which meant windrowing deadfall, side by side with my dad. Eventually, she developed a great love for the new country.

Johnny Gulick broke forty acres and Scotty McWhirter broke ten that summer. Wilfred had broken 30 acres with horses the year before, so the new farm in the Peace Country got away to a fairly good start.



The Parlee family in 1930. Back Row, Left to Right: Becky, Mother, Dad, Lottie and Sam. Front Row: Beth, Jo and Buck.

PIONEERS BUILT BRIDGES WITHOUT GOV'T AID

Wilfred and Mr. Funk and sons, Albert and Jack, put the first crossing on the Kakut creek in the West Vale District, in the summer of 1928. The winding grade is still in perfect shape, though it has not been in use for many years.

Wilfred went back to Saskatchewan permanently, after he proved up his homestead in 1931. He took over my dad's farm at Grayson, where he lives with his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren.

THE BIG BRASS BED HAD A SAGGING SPRING

Dave and Wilfred batched together the first winter in the Peace. The latter was droll and dominant, and was admired and greatly loved for it all. They slept on a bed with a spring that sagged in it's huge oaken frame, and Dave invariably rolled toward the centre. In relating what ultimately followed, Wilfred put it this way,

"I got up out of bed one night and went outside and got a spruce pole. I trimmed off all the knots with an axe. Then I went in and rolled up my side of the mattress and

threw the pole under it to divide my side from his. I said, "Now you can stay on your side and I'll stay on mine!"

The arrangement must have been satisfactory to both, and Dave knew better than to complain.

PURTY FAIR BREAD

One afternoon Wilfred came home to find a note from Dave, which read as follows:

"I've gone for the mail, could you put the bread in the pans? If I'm not back in time, could you bake it?"

"I took one look at the bread," Wilfred said, "and I figured if that pan would go into the oven just the way it was I'd bake it." The oven was extra large and in went the bread.

"I kept the fire going 'till I thought it ought to be done. Well, it turned out to be an awful big loaf, but PURTY fair bread!"

Dave had his pleasant stories, too. He was riding the freight to the Peace in the fall of '32. The weather was dark and drizzly, and he and some other men shared a box car without blankets, and one man had no coat. The freight train on which they were riding pulled in at a siding in a small town. It was Dave's turn to go to the store for some food. The store keeper turned out to be very kind and Dave asked if he might have an empty bean bag - the very heavy kind, that was used to ship beans in at that time. His friends were glad to see him back, with victuals slung over his shoulder. Then Dave did a tailoring job.

THE HOBO GETS A FREE LUNCH AND A SWEATER

He put it this way:

"I took out my jack-knife and made an opening for the poor man's head, and a slit for each arm.

That poor man - I tell you what - he was delighted! He got into that make-shift sweater with the tail tucked in and buckled under his belt, and was a much warmer and happier man for the rest of the journey."



Back Row, Left to Right: Carl Nagel and Sam Parlee. Front Row: Tom and Dave Parlee.

THE VOTE WAS LOST

In the latter part of '28, my dad drew up the boundaries of the proposed West Vale School District to the

satisfaction of the Department of Education. The first school meeting was held in Wilfred's house, where my dad and mother had made their home. This was in May, 1929. With the late William in the chair, a vote was taken as to whether or not the people wanted a school. The vote was lost, so another meeting was called with notices posted and the time element carefully observed.

At the second meeting, held in the same house, and presided over by the same man, the vote carried in favor of a school. The board was elected. Dave Funk, William Hallock, and Lawrence Wilson as trustees, and Ken Munro appointed as secretary. The school was still more than a year away, and the family that had been taken out of school in Saskatchewan in order to bring the required number of students up to government stipulations, lost that time.

When I came to the district, in February of 1930, the walls of the log school were about halfway up. One day when I was away from home, Mr. Lawrence Wilson called and asked if "the young lad" could come and help on the school. I did go, took my lunch with me, and worked under the direction of a very pleasant man named McDougal, who had been hired by the board to superintend the building of the school. I enjoyed working with him a great deal, and though I had at that time, some experience with lumber, I knew nothing about fitting logs. Mac was an excellent axeman and carpenter. He hummed and whistled his Scottish tunes, as he whittled his dove tails to a precision fit.

THE SECRETARY AND CHAIRMAN DETECT A FLAW

Some days a number would turn out to work, as the settlers were providing labor without charge. Some days there would be just a few of us and our foreman. He didn't seem to mind how many came or went.

When the walls were finished, Mac assigned Mr. Funk and myself the job of cutting the rafters out of rough green material. We built each rafter on the ground, with the collar ties set in to serve as ceiling joist. These were heavy to lift without the aid of modern methods. Some may look up at the rafter toes and declare that they were built of material that went through the planner. Only the toes were planned and all by hand.

George Tracy and I were asked to cut and fit the jack rafters, which we did. Inadvertantly, we made a flaw at the south gable. We had the roof shingled before it was detected. It was Ken Munro and Lawrence Wilson who drew it to our attention. The wee birth-mark is still there after a half century. The building is no less sweet to look upon, and it is doubtful if many noticed.

A great many turned out for putting on the sheathing, and to help with the shingling. (This was the spring break-up, 1930.) On this job. I had the opportunity to meet many of the settlers who where as new to the district as I. There were no roads, only trails. One man, whom I met for the first time, was Oscar Bjerkland. He waded through the Kakut Creek on his first morning to work, because he didn't know there was a bridge in Bohnke's yard.

DAD BUILDS THE CHIMNEY

One morning in April, my dad, brother Dave and I took Dollie and Nig and headed for Tracy's sand pit. We were able to get plenty of sand for the brick chimney for the school. Dad laid the brick and Dave mixed the mortar. The sand was very fine and hardly fit for such work, but the chimney appears to be in good shape after half a century.

SCOTTISH HUMOR WITH "BLACK" McDOUGAL

As I walked to work with Mr. McDougal one morning, jumping from one willow hassock to another, our foreman said to us,

"A man must like his work when he will go through the likes of this to get there!"

Along with local taxes, government grants were made available to the new board, and did provide for lumber, doors, sashes, shingles, and nails. However, it was necessary to furnish the school through debentures. The only cost for labor was that of the foreman, "Black" McDougal.



West Vale School also used for church services.

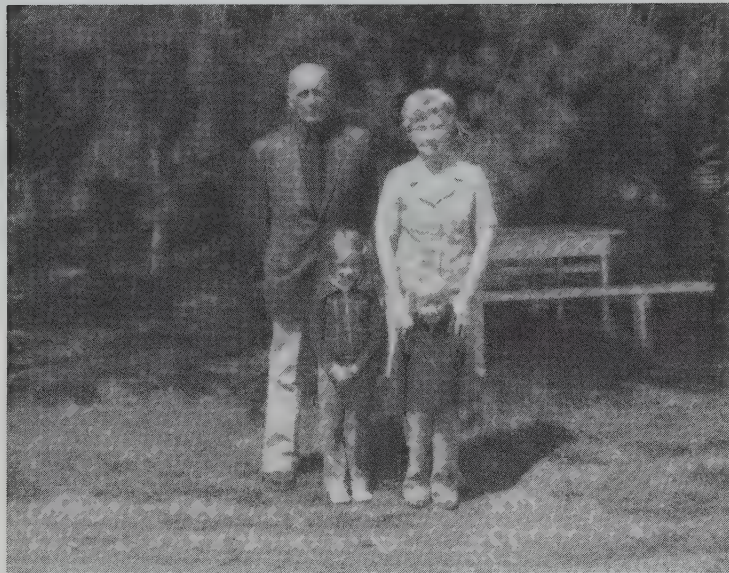
FIRST OUTDOOR SERVICE

Our family, the Nagel brothers and the Funk family attended the first service on a Sunday in May, 1930. A young Lutheran preacher by the name of Ryner, who had attended college with Paul Nagel, walked out to see the Nagels and decided to hold a meeting while he was there. It turned out that the school was locked, so we gathered on the east side of the new building. The recollection is clear, even as to what was brought out in the sermon that morning.

After the service, the minister had lunch at the Funks, as did some of the rest of us. He then proceeded on his return journey. He was well prepared for travel, and made it both ways in breeches, heavy boots and a strong pair of legs. A charming young man he was. I wonder where he is today.

My sister, Becky married Paul Nagel, and Beth married his brother, Carl. Josephine, the youngest of us all, joined the armed forces at the time of the second

world war, and married Gordon Meikle. They live in Ontario.



Sam and Ada Parlee in their backyard with granddaughters Twila and Lois.

THE LAST OF THE WEE BAND OF PRAIRIE CHICKENS

The Mumby family moved into the district in 1937, along with my brother, Bob and his five year old son, Robert Jr. Bob was a widower at the time and in June, 1938, he married Edith, the eldest daughter in the Mumby family, who was a deaconess.

My brothers Dave and Tom married the Mumby twins, Eva and Edna, in October of that year, in a double wedding ceremony.

Last of all, I married Ada in November of the same year. These people had come from a place called Sheho, on the Saskatchewan prairie. It has been said that 'Sheho' means 'Prairie Chicken', in the language of the native people of that region. This could be. So it may be safe to say that, as our caption would imply, and being that the family consisted of four girls, we did take the entire band!

Bob came as an ordained minister, and held services in this and many communities, for many years. He also taught school at West Vale, Kisituan, North Mark, and Clairmont. He also owned a farm and did the farming for a number of years. He passed away in 1969.

His eldest son, *Bob Jr.* operates the Texaco Service Station on Clairmont Road, is married with a grown up family of three. *Jock* is a partsman at Thompson Motors, and his wife is a nurse at the Municipal Hospital. They have two children. *Michael* has a farm at Spirit River. He also has some heavy equipment. He married a sister of *Jock's* wife, who is also a nurse, and they have two children.

Miriam is a nurse at the W. Cross Hospital, with a husband named Ken Hoff, with one child.

Rachel, the youngest, is the mother of four, the last of whom are twins. Her husband, Lorne Nystead, builds houses in Grande Prairie.

DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM

There were times of grave concern, even in the preacher's house. On one occasion, the kids came tearing into the house to say that Michael was under the bridge and couldn't get back on top. Edith ran down to the creek to find the boy hanging by his up-stretched arms from a beam. He had let himself down, but couldn't pull himself back up. Down below, the Kakut was roaring, and if the wee lad's arms had given out, there would have been little chance to save him from drowning. His mother reached over the edge of the bridge and retrieved her precious lad from a most precarious position.

WILFRED RETURNS TO THE HOME FARM IN SASKATCHEWAN

In July of 1929, Wilfred came back to batch with Tom and me. We loaded a flat car with a threshing machine and some other farm equipment, and sent it out to Wanham. I came out to the Peace in 1930.

On December 26, 1930, Wilfred and Tom arrived with another box car of settlers effects. They spent Christmas day at McLennan. The cows and horses were taken out of the car to feed, and the men went to the restaurant for a turkey dinner.

Dad and I drove in with the team to meet them, and the freight pulled in about midnight. The night was mild and beautiful and there was no snow on the ground.

We put the stock in the corral, loaded the wagons with household effects and set off for the homestead. The next day we went back and with the help of Ken Munro and the Funk family, we brought the remainder of the equipment and the cattle.

When we learned that Wilfred and Tom were to come, my dad and I, with Jim Beange's help, set to work to build two log barns. This made a total of three, so we could put all of the livestock inside as the custom was in that day. (Dave was back in Saskatchewan by this time, looking after the farm there.)



Tom and Edna Parlee with Harvey, Richard and Donna Mae.

FIRE IN THE GABLES

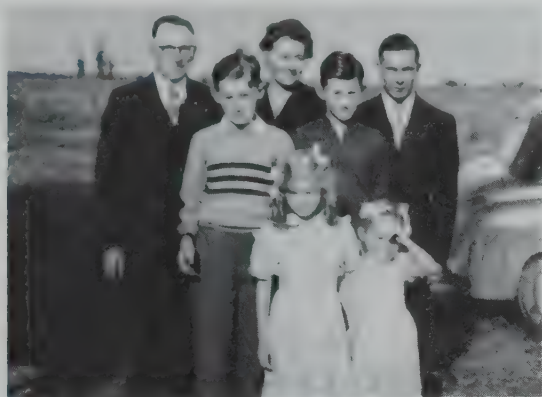
It was in the winter of '32 that we had a close brush with a night fire. In the dead of night, Dad let out an unforgettable shout!

"Boys! Boys! The house is on fire!" I slept nearest the door and was on the roof in no time flat. My brothers

carried water up the ladder to me in their bare feet. No one complained about the cold and no fire brigade was ever more successful in extinguishing a fire. An overheated chimney had gotten the gable and roof on fire, where an addition joined the main dwelling.

'All's well that ends well.' We hit the hay again that night, but not to sleep.

I am ever thankful that a parent slept a little lighter than the rest, and that the huge hogshead had been fully replenished from the spring, without which we could not have controlled the fire.



The Robert Parlee Family - 1946. Back Row, Left to Right: Robert, Edith, Robert Jr., Michael, Jonathan, Miriam and Rachel.

CAR HIT BY THE TRAIN

Brother Tom took over the Hudson Bay land that my dad had acquired, when he first came to the district. He also bought another quarter from the Hudson Bay Company. He farmed until his death on March 1, 1955.

Tom's car was hit by the train at Wanham. He was dead upon arrival at the hospital in Spirit River.

Brother Tom left a young widow, Edna, and a family of three. They were a very close knit family. Tom had been one to wrestle with the boys on the living room floor, and his daughter, Donna Mae, loved to lean against his broad chest as she sat on her dad's lap.

Edna married again some years later, after moving to Sexsmith, where she spent many years as a clerk in the Marshall Wells store.

Her eldest son, *Harvey*, has taken over the family farm and lives at Clairmont. He also has a farm at Webster. Shirley, his wife, teaches in Grande Prairie. They have two children.

Richard is a minister of the gospel. He lives in Ucluelet, B.C. He and his wife, Pat have a family of five.

Donna married Brad Olson of Beaverlodge. Brad teaches at the Peace River Bible Institute. They have a family of four.

My sister Rebecca lost her husband in 1959, after which time she moved to the city to take nurse's aide training. She is presently employed at the hospital in Red Deer. She has two sons and two daughters.

Walter teaches journalism at S.A.I.T. in Calgary. His wife is a staff writer for the Calgary Herald. They have one son and one daughter.

Verna is married to Clem Bernhardson, who is a professor at the University in Saskatoon. Verna taught in Wanham at one time. They have a family of two.

Gordon is a Professor of Philosophy, presently in Ontario, and has a wife and family of two.

Jean is a nurse and is married to Leonard Lukas, with a family of two. They have a cattle ranch at Sundre, Alberta.

My sister, Lottie and her husband Joe Holmes live in Central Park Lodge in Grande Prairie.

Dave and Eva sold their farm and moved to Grande Prairie in 1956, where he worked at the hospital until his retirement. They have four sons, five daughters and 24 grandchildren.

Morgan, the eldest son, has trenching equipment.

Dan, is a plumber, *Alfred*, an electrician, *Linton*, is in house building.

Betty's husband, Garry McRae, is an electrician.

Lillian's husband is in the construction business.

Margaret married Ray Sanderson, who is a trucker.

Beverly, and her husband, Don Fast, live in Saskatchewan, where Don is trucking.

Ruth, and her husband, Lynn Neufeld are renting our farm. He is presently working for D&B Construction in Grande Prairie. Ruth has been the pianist at Bethel Chapel for many years. Other ladies assist with the music program now.

Our son, Everett, bought Ernie Gouchee's farm, and is married to Eunice Baylis of Prince George, B.C. They have 2 boys and 2 girls. Everett raises some registered horses. At present we have a registered stallion between us. He has some trophies for horse ploughing. He has also raised registered cattle.

Everett and Eunice take an active part in the program of the church and Sunday school in Bethel Chapel, Wanham.



The Everett Parlee Family - 1977. Left to Right: Lois, Twila, Eunice holding Darrell, Everett holding Darcy.

LADY AND THE FOX

When Everett was about twelve years old, his cousin, Richard, came over to our place one day when I was away

from home. They decided to go and visit Glen Olsen, who lived about three miles away. They hitched Lady, our favorite driving mare, to the little red cutter and set off. A fox dashed out on to the road just as they were getting close to their destination. The mare was taken by surprise, and she turned so swiftly that both boys flew out of the cutter on to the road! Lady was gone like a flash. She pulled up in front of our kitchen door and waited for Ada to come and take her back. Nothing was harmed or broken, and the mare had an opportunity to get cooled down at the slower pace back to pick up the boys.

Our daughter, Sybil is married to Jerry Biffart. They have 2 girls and 2 boys. Jerry is with the Mutual Life Assurance Company of Canada. He is also First Vice-Chairman of the Christian Business Men of Canada. Sybil and Jerry also assist in the music program and the Sunday school, in Bethel Chapel, Wanham.

SITTING ON THE SUNNY SIDE

One fall while I was hauling grain, young Sybil and Everett were dressed in parkas and put out to play. In a short while, they were both out of sight. Ada called and called, and looked everywhere but could find no trace of them whatever. She ran all the way to Edith's place, to get her mother and dad. Together they continued their frantic search. Out in the field we had a granary of wheat and a huge pile of straw. The kids hadn't heard them call and were on the sunny side of the granary - eating wheat!

My dad passed away in 1950, at the age of 75, and Mother in 1969, at the age of 88 1/2.

This poem was written in memory of my dad, who was twice a pioneer:

Prairie Pioneer

Where sleeps the pioneer
Who on a Prairie morn
Laid hold the handles of the plow
Before the day was born;

Who, with patient oxen
Yoked to the faithful share,
Threw, wave on wave, the virgin soil
Great future to prepare?

Mark well the place of his repose!
Tell others of his name!
No nobler race of pioneer
Can our affection claim.

Full sixty summers now have gone,
Their joys and sorrows too,
Yet many share the heritage
Of the bold and faithful few.

In fancy I beheld him there,
In the hour of manhood's prime,
Praying, trusting Providence would
Bless his toil in time.

And no man's debtor shalt Thou be
Thou great Eternal King,
Who gives to all men liberally,
O'ershadowed by Thy Wing.

For in a nobler, sweeter way
Thy servant was supplied,
And openly declared to all,
His soul was satisfied.

Placed Thou the blessings on his toil;
The answer to his prayer,
Let no man doubt the awesome truth,
Strong evidence is there.

I hear the parson pray and preach,
I hear the choir sing
In yonder village, in the church,
The joyful anthems ring.

His table didst Thou furnish, Lord,
With much to spare beside,
And bread upon the waters, too,
Was scattered far and wide.

And now returns in season due,
As thou didst once proclaim,
To prove that Thou art faithful, Lord
Oh, glory to Thy name.



Buck and Eileen Parlee on their 30th wedding anniversary - 1972.

BUCK PARLEE

submitted by Mrs. Eileen Parlee

On March 15, 1929, Buck Parlee arrived at the Wanham station with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Parlee and several other family members. He grew, as all prairie-born boys did, learning to adjust to life on a bush homestead. He attended the West Vale log school, which opened a year or two later with Miss Alice Hawkinson, the first teacher. He wasn't spared any of the hard work to be done as the land was cleared with an axe, and breaking done with horses or oxen, even if he was the youngest boy of a large family. Time carried on, and he found friendship with the young bachelors of the district.

It was at a Baptist Church fellowship supper, during the war years, that he met me, Eileen Woodward, Dr. Carlisle's office assistant. Just before our marriage, a year or so later, I visited my parents at Crooked Creek for a week or two. The day came for Cecil, my brother, to drive me by team and sled to catch the mail truck at Crooked Creek (a drive of nine miles), to go to Grande Prairie to complete our wedding preparations. We upset



Buck and Eileen's first home in 1942. Front Row, Left to Right: Eileen, Ada, Margery Woodward. Back Row: Sam.

the sled as the team was lively, and the snow was so deep that the sled runner trail had built up too high, thus we slipped off. When the men got the wagonbox upright, I was still sitting in the same arm chair I was in when we tipped. No harm done!

We got along fine in the truck over the icy winter road to the Smoky river bank. There we had to unload the mail, cargo, and passengers into the waiting row boat. Then we crossed the river safely while two men rowed, and the third pushed the boat away from the floating ice cakes with an ice pick.

Cecil jumped from ice cake to ice cake a few days later, to give the bride away, as my parents were just not able to jump the cakes!

We were married November 16, 1942, at the McLaurin Baptist Church, at eight a.m. with Reverend J.A. Roskam officiating. The hotel in Grande Prairie was always full then with army personnel. It was necessary for Mrs. Carlisle to have the wedding reception the night before - so that after the ceremony, we could catch the 11

a.m. train to Woking, and then to our new home. Incidentally, we have hanging on our wall now, a plaque made from a piece of fir flooring from the church, which has been gone for some time.

Sam, Buck's brother, was at Woking with a team and sled to bring the bride and groom and all their belongings home. He had put in extra wood blocks, perhaps for seating, or heating. They were just taking up too much room as we loaded up. Buck was getting things arranged hurriedly, as it was very cold. He decided a few blocks just had to go out, and they did - one right after another, until one got Sam right on top of the head! He surely must carry to this day the effects of that blow. After about three hours of driving it was good to be greeted by Grandma and Grandpa Parlee in their home. Grandma and Beth and Becky had prepared such a nice wedding supper, with all of the available family members in attendance.

Our first home was a very nice hand-hewn log house that Buck had built on the N.W. 30-76-3-west of 6. While we lived there, Buck cut logs and had them sawed into lumber, out of which he built the West Vale General Store, (with living quarters) that we opened in July of 1945 on the corner of S.W. 30-76-3-W6. Owing to the fact that we were still living under War Regulations, we had to do all our purchasing through the Wartimes Prices and Trade Board. Many of our supplies were issued on a quota basis, such as sugar, lard, cheese etc. The only commodities that had to be sold by ration were sugar and gas. Each family, upon application, was issued a ration book of tickets. The tickets could be used for sugar, icing sugar, or brown sugar. (These last two items were almost impossible to get.) Also, we had to adhere to the letter, to the requirements of the Board, as we had regular visits from the Inspector, who asked for detailed reports. We also sold farm and car gas, hardware, and a moderate line of other merchandise.



The West Vale Store 1949. Eileen with Doreen and Allen.

PERSONALIZED FLOUR SACK "LINENS"

Prices of groceries, even if our country was involved in a war, were much different than they are today. Flour was \$3.25 for a hundred lbs., and was sold in cotton bags that the farm housewives were very glad to bleach for dish towels, aprons and even to embroider them for pillow cases or dresser scarves. We were the only family

with personalized sheets, as our name was stamped on the bags at the wholesalers. No amount of bleaching would remove the I.A. Parlee stamp!

Bread was ten cents a loaf, coffee thirty-five cents a lb., and tea sixty-five cents a lb. We sold car gas, first from a barrel, using a gallon measure - then later we really felt prosperous when we could erect a gas pump that was filled by pumping a hand lever, (the original Ralph Pickard gas pump.)

Money was still very scarce, so it was often necessary to take home-made butter or eggs in exchange for groceries. One stormy winter day, Buck got stuck with the coupe car as he was hauling freight. He managed to bring the perishable things home, and we granted our customers permission to take creamery butter from the vehicle as they walked home, carrying their groceries on their backs. We managed until the storm broke.

During the later part of the war, due to bridges and ferries being out, and impassable roads, through the West Vale District and past our store was the only land route usable between the United States and the Alaskan state, (other than to go by the Pacific or by air). Many times we watched great long truck convoys grinding their way through the muck, on their way to the Alaska Highway.

When we got the store established, Buck appealed to the customers to circulate a petition so that application could be made for a post office. The 100 per cent backing promptly brought into the area the West Vale Post Office, with Buck as the Postmaster. He was paid \$27.00 a month for this service rendered to the public. Mail was hauled by team or truck from Wanham, by Dick Bozarth or Ole Linjord.

TWO SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

One of our post office patrons, - also a customer - was expecting a baby at their house. The expectant mother was not at all well and medicine was mailed to the post office for her, C.O.D. The young father called for it, but didn't have any money. I knew of this complicated problem and was wondering what I could do to see that she got the necessary medication. Just then another customer came into the store asking for potatoes. I didn't have any in stock, but I agreed to sell enough potatoes dug from my own garden, for cash, to pay the C.O.D. demand, so that the sick neighbor could have her much needed prescription. Thus, at that moment we satisfied two customers at once.

Also one very stormy, snowy and cold winter, I remember Buck writing a cheque to a customer for nine dollars. That same cheque went through our books nine times that winter as business transactions were completed among the neighbors. The cheque came back each time to pay for a grocery order. In spite of the laws of the land, people did survive and were still honest in the face of their fellow man.

ACROSS THE RIVER BY BASKET

At Easter time in '45, we wanted my parents at Crooked Creek to see their first grandchild, Doreen. We

drove to the Smokey River in our 1931 Chev. Sports model coupe. This time, because of the ice, we had to portage overhead to meet Grandpa, who was waiting on the other shore. We used the 8' x 3' (approximately) wooden basket suspended by the cable ordinarily used for summer ferry conveyance. Up the ladder I went first, and into the basket to be ready to receive the precious bundle when Buck climbed up with her. Then up came the operator. The two men now stood up, seized the cable and undid the snub rope, pulled the birch wedge from the pulley and gave the command, "Let her go!" Away we whistled through space and mounted the other side, within two-thirds of our goal. At this rapidly slowing point, the men grasped the cable and, hand over hand, pulled the basket to the opposite snub. Dismount! Climb down, and then make whoopy!

After a nice visit with Grandpa and Grandma and Margery, we were back to the Smokey again. This time we crossed in the boat by means of using long pike poles with pickaroon points, stabbing, pushing and pulling from ice cake to ice cake, while the beautiful Smokey rolled on.

During our almost forty years of marriage, other things have been accomplished. Two other children were born - Allan and Nelson. We closed the store just prior to Nelson's arrival. When he was about three, we moved to Fairview, where we lived for the next five years. Those years were busy, too. We were involved in a number of things. We ran a jewellery store for a time. Buck carpentered on the Dunvegan Bridge; was an operator at the Northland Utility Electric Plant, and worked in different parts of the country in construction work. He and his partner were the first carpenters hired on the all cement North Capilano Bridge structure - the first of it's kind on the North American Continent. This was brought in by a Norwegian firm.

I worked in the Fairview post office, also in a hardware and grocery store. When we were planning to move back to the farm before school opened, Johnnie Hall asked me to run the Wanham post office for two weeks, so they could take a much needed holiday.

For five and a half years I was matron of Pioneer Lodge, Grande Prairie - a home where I cared for 87 Senior Citizens. Buck was very busy at home with farm activities during those years. We still reside on the farm.

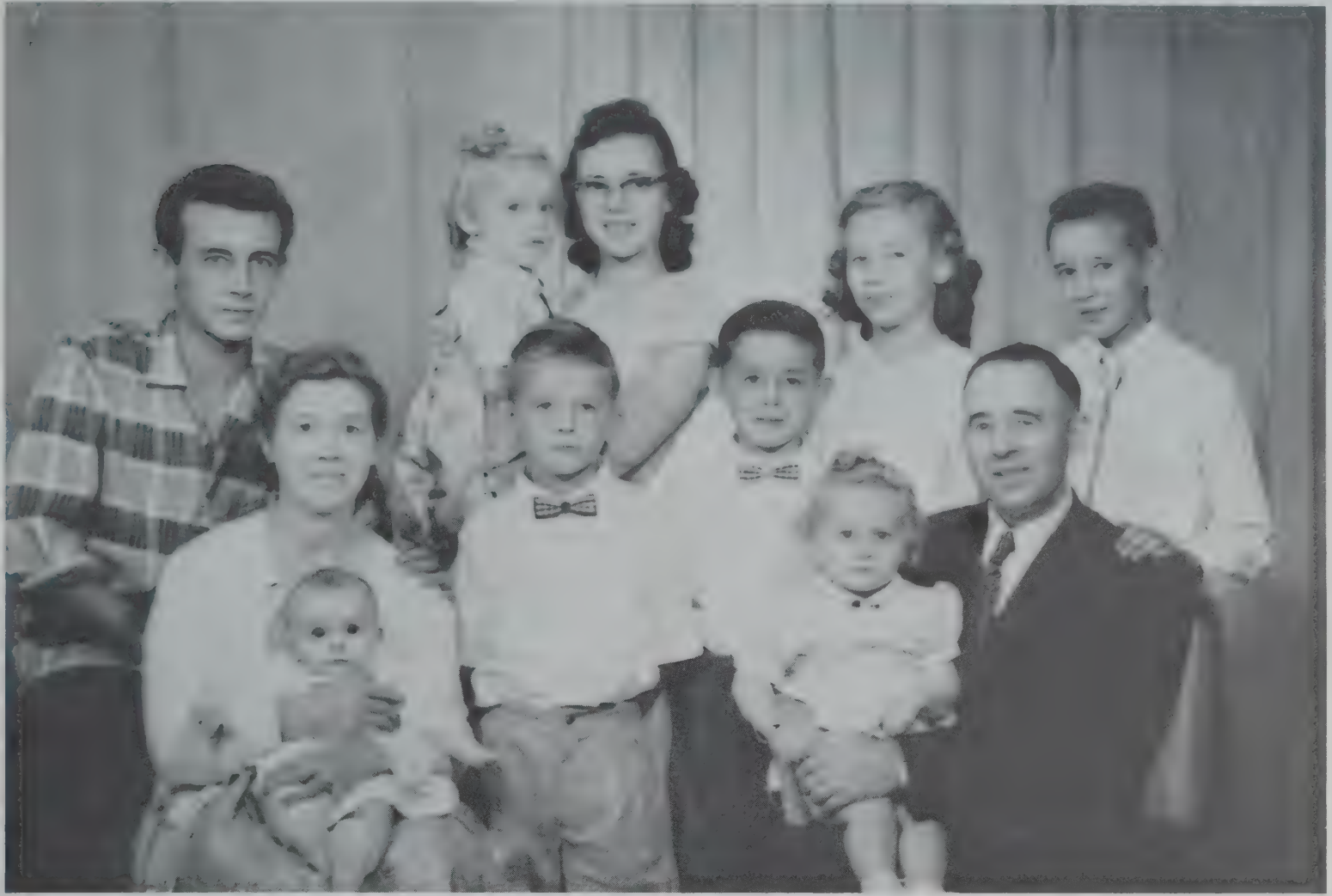
Our interest in Christian activities was nurtured and



Tom Parlee's house being moved into Wanham 1957. Gas pump at Buck's store.

grounded long before we met at the Baptist Church. We have tried, in a humble way, to uphold the cause of Christianity - the only answer to mankind.

until 1936) what was I to do? I hurried home, and came back with the team, a chain and good old Dad to loan a hand.



The Dave Parlee Family - 1957. Back Row, Left to Right: Morgan, Ruth, Lillian Margaret, Linton. Front Row: Eva holding Betty, Dan, Alfred, Dave holding Beverly.

DAVE PARLEE

A HELPING HAND

As I look back over the years, I look with memories' eye on a small scene as I took my brother and sisters to school one spring morning in the early thirties. There, just over the creek bank, was a creature protruding from the surface of the creek. It was not hard to determine what it was, because there was a sucking colt which had preceded its dam and was on our side of the creek. But mom was not so agile or fortunate as her daughter, and did not make it to the landing. She had waded through water five or six feet deep and perhaps sixteen feet wide.

The old mare had tried to make it, but was unsuccessful. There she was with her forefeet on the bank, sitting in the water with about two thirds of her body in the water and one third out.

There was a great need of a pull, or help of some kind; perhaps a tractor to ease her forward with a chain around the neck. As I did not have a tractor, (did not acquire one

We soon hitched on to her, and out on the bank she came, soaking wet and cold. Dad and I worked with hands full of dry grass and rubbed the weary limbs, until they received some circulation. After about half an hour we coaxed her to get up, and with a little help from us she walked the eighty rods or more to the buildings. There she received chop until the owner took her home.

As a good neighbor, I just wish to pass this little, but important, message on to all my good neighbors and friends, and to all of you whom I have not known.

God's word declares "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Prov. 14:12" Let you and me ask ourselves this question. "Are we looking at what seems to be the right way? Are we going to miss the right way?"

The way of salvation is the way of the cross of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who once died to redeem us from a lost eternity by shedding His precious blood. Look in Hebrews 9:22.

The scriptures say, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." This means there is no possibility of getting into Heaven without accepting this tremendous

fact. Do not look for another way.

The scriptures declare, "There is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Please let me point you to the book of Mark, chapter 16 verse 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Let us take a look at the book of Ezekial, chapter 3:18, a solemn warning to you and me, when we know and do not warn the wicked of their wicked ways.

WILFRED H. PARLEE

submitted by Eileen Parlee

The Peace River Bug hit here and there all over the Prairie Provinces. Wilfred's father, William N. Parlee became keenly interested in this new undeveloped land - often called "The Last Frontier." This interest was so intense that he went specially to visit Dave Funk, who lived in the Newdorf, Saskatchewan area. Dave had made a trip to the north in the fall of 1927 and his praise rang high as he told of chinook weather - so fine, indeed, that it was quite possible to walk from Peoria to the present West Vale area with ease.

William, Earnie, (Wilfred's cousin) Dave Funk and George Plosz, (a neighbor boy) 'came to see.' Earnie was not impressed. As he stated, "Let pine trees grow where pine trees grow!" - packed his bag and went home. Wilfred was encouraged to come in February - and sure enough, he too enjoyed beautiful chinook conditions. He walked, looked about and decided to homestead (file) on S.W.30-76-3-Wof6.

Because he didn't have a log shack built to live in, he returned home to Grayson and started preparations to return in the later spring. He arrived in Wanham June 3, 1928 with settlers effects to fulfill his homestead duties, and in due time proved it up - thus gaining his title. The breaking was done with a John Deere wooden beam plow and six horses. This implement was later traded in on a Massey plow.

During Wilfred's stay in the Peace River country he enjoyed his young life, did a lot of things and made a host of friends.

Upon returning to the family farm again in 1931 with a carload of settlers effects, he spent Christmas Day in a box car which had been shunted to a siding at McLennan.

He worked for George Reiswig as a farm hand in 1932. Forest fires were an ever present worry in those days as there was so much timber growth. Millions of feet of lumber went up in smoke. Many homesteaders lost their first homes as the wind fanned the flames. For a time he worked for the fire department - hauling supplies to the fire fighters on horseback and leading a pack horse.

"HOME, GIRL!"

The weather turned very cold indeed after the fine chinook. Wilfred could see that to be sure of the land he wanted for another party, he would have to file on it by proxy. The filing office was in Grande Prairie, so away he went on the train from Wanham. He arrived back in

Wanham in the night - one that boasted -55 degrees F temperature. He found it much too cold to ride his horse back to his shack in the West Vale area, so he tied the halter shank to this horse's tail, caught the rope in his hand and said, "Home, Girl!"

Every little while the horse would turn for him to clean the ice from her nostrils and eyes. Then on they would go. "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." Particularly on that night.

One day as Wilfred neared the town of Wanham, (a twelve mile ride on horseback) he noticed smoke rising. He hurried along tracing the source to Ted Baker's Butcher Shop. Ted did his own meat curing and smoking. The fire had gotten too boisterous as he slept. Wilfred hurried off his horse just in time to save the meats in stock. Ted was so grateful, he presented Wilfred with a nice package of sausage - a rare treat in those days. Pete Tansem was the friendly grocer in those early years.

Dave Funk and Wilfred, with an old road "slip", made the first passage way through the Cadot of West Vale from Wanham. They used the slip and team to dig a groove in the bank wide enough to accomodate a wagon. Several piles of slabs were laid to make a bridge decking - thus they got across the creek.

Wilfred's parents and some of the younger members of the family arrived in March of 1929 by train to help develop this great land. They were met at the Wanham station by Wilfred, Dave Parlee and George Tracy. They travelled the twelve miles to Wilfred's shack by team and sled.

Wilfred left on July 5, 1932, to return to the family farm at Grayson, Saskatchewan. As we sat by the picture window in March of 1980, it was a real pleasure for me to listen to him, (now up in his 70's) reminisce of his younger days in the Peace country.

He still lives on the same farm in Saskatchewan where he greatly enjoys his son and family.

THE FRED PEARSONS

*memories submitted by their daughter; Nancy
(Mrs. Roger J. Nadeau of Merrit, B.C.)*

My father, Wilfred Pearson, (who liked better to be called 'Fred') was born in 1890 in Yorkshire, England. My mother, Mary (Smith) Pearson, was also born in Yorkshire in 1891. Mary was a children's nurse and Wilfred was a school teacher. But he wanted to be a farmer, so he came to Canada in 1913 and worked on a farm in North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

Dad was in Canada when World War I broke out, so he went to Winnipeg and joined up. He was in the 'Fort Garry Horse Cavalry' regiment and went overseas in 1914. He was in France at Vimy Ridge, Ypres, Passchendale, and Bourseville; but wounded in 1918, he returned to England before the war was over. Rusty Hollingsworth of Teepee Creek, and 'Knobby' Clark, a brother of Jack Clark of the Bad Heart District, were both in the same cavalry division as my dad. Perhaps Mr. Meadus was too, or they may have met him on the boat coming back to Canada.

Mother and Dad were married in August, 1918, and



Golden Wedding Anniversary - 1968. Wilfred and Mary Pearson.

returned to Canada after the war was over. They came as far West as Edmonton, and lived there until the summer of 1919. My father took his army discharge in Edmonton, and apparently worked for awhile as a delivery man for McGavins bakery. There was a government scheme to provide land for the veterans, and a group of men were supposed to be going to Pouce Coupe to file on homesteads. However, on the train going north, some fellows were heard talking about all this land out south of Wanham. They decided to get off and have a look. From all accounts, it was a two day trip from Edmonton to Grande Prairie by train in those days. The men liked what they saw, and went to the land office to file their homesteads. I believe Howard Meadus, Bob Starratt, and Percy Close were with Dad. Anyway, he found his place, built a sod-roofed shack, then went back to Edmonton to get my mother.

There was no road from Wanham to Heart Valley at that time, so they made the trip on horseback. My mother wasn't too keen on horses and didn't know much about riding, so it was a very frightening trip for her. The horseflies and mosquitoes were very bad, so she was severely bitten by the time the ride was over. When she saw the sod-roofed shack that was to be her new home, she burst into tears and wished she had stayed in England.

I (Nancy) was born in November 1919, in the old Grande Prairie hospital. I believe my mother went to Grande Prairie by train from Wanham, and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Stredulinsky for awhile before I was born. I think the attending physician was Dr. O'Brien. Two years later, in October 1921, my brother Ronald was born, in Spirit River, I think. Then in 1931, Maurice was born - in the new Grande Prairie hospital.

My mother used to tell of the rain coming through the roof of the sod-roofed shack and getting everything wet. But within the next four or five years, Dad was able to build a better house of logs with a shingled roof and good windows. The windows were obtained from an old schoolhouse at Belloy that was being torn down. It seems Dad taught school at Belloy for about six months, when I was about 1 1/2 or 2 years old. I don't know why he did this short period of teaching. He may not have enjoyed it too much, being anxious to get on with his farming.



Nancy and Ron feeding chickens.

The farming was hard work, but he stayed with it until 1939. Most of the work was done with horses, but in later years Dad managed to acquire a Fordson tractor. During an electrical storm one summer, the tractor was struck by lightning and the block was cracked. So the poor tractor just sat there until there was enough money to repair it. I think it must have been about 1928 that they had a real bumper crop, and the price of grain was going up. Some of the fellows sold at eighty or ninety cents a bushel, but wheat was supposed to go to a dollar, and Dad hung on. Then came the crash of 1929, the price dropped away down, and my dad ended up selling for fifteen to twenty cents a bushel. This really disheartened him, and then came the depression.

We didn't have to apply for relief during the 1930's, but there were some pretty lean times. Finally, in 1939, they gave up the farm and moved to the coast, where Dad worked for the American Can Company until his retirement in 1956. Both my parents passed away, within three weeks of each other, in July, 1972.

There were no really outstanding events in their lives - no terrible tragedies, accidents, or great accomplishments, but they never regretted their years on the farm during those pioneer times. My father's favorite saying was, "Necessity is the mother of invention"; my mother's, "There's no such word as can't".

I was quite young and don't remember the year, but I can remember that my folks used to go to Belloy, (We lived in Heart Valley) to visit Mr. and Mrs. Jim Babb. It seems that they used to stay several days and would visit other people during their stay. One of the other friends was Preston Bankhead and I believe, his son Chris. I can't recall a Mrs. Bankhead but Prest, as my child's memory pictures him was the old-time tall, lanky, cowpuncher type. As children, my brother and I would sit on the floor nearby listening as the grownups talked. This particular visit was made after Prest had had his teeth removed and been fitted with dentures. As this was a happening of some interest, my father asked him,

“Well, Prest, how do your new teeth fit?”. To which Prest replied in his rather laconic manner, “They fit like a saddle on a sow”. I can still recall my father laughing, - this was a very apt description and amused everyone who heard the story from then on.



Maurice and Nancy Pearson in front of their sod roof house.

THE BAPTISIM

Another happening I recall was also very funny, and this time my father was more or less “the victim”. In Peoria (which was the district across the Kadot, north of Heart Valley) they were having a special ceremony, to baptise a group of people who were becoming Seventh Day Adventists. This affair was to take place at Lawrence Toftner’s place because he had a dam with good clear water that wasn’t too deep. There was to be a lunch, etc. after the ceremony so folks from all the neighbouring communities came to watch, visit, and make a sort of picnic outing for the day.

Now, floating on this dam was a fair sized galvanized stock-watering trough which the kids were using for a boat. They were paddling this thing around and having a great time with it, so my dad thought he would try it too. But when he got into it he discovered it was pretty wet on the bottom and, because he had his good suit on, he didn’t want to kneel right down on the bottom. So he sort of squatted on his haunches and pushed the thing out from shore. But because of his position it wasn’t so easy to balance and first thing he knew it tipped over and dumped him into the water. All this went on before the start of the real baptizing ceremony. Well, you can imagine the bedlam that followed, and the razzing he took for being the first convert of the day! My poor father - he was so embarrassed by what happened that he wouldn’t go to Wanham or the post office for the longest time afterwards.

My dad was in the Canadian Army in World War I. He had been working at North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and joined up at Winnipeg. He served in a cavalry battallion called the ‘Fort Garry Horse’. After the war he decided to avail himself of some of the Soldier Settlement land that was then made available to veterans. He was actually headed for Pouce Coupe but, on the train out of Edmonton, he heard some of the fellows talking about

this other place, out towards the Smoky River. It sounded pretty good to him so when the train arrived at (I believe) Spirit River, he got off along with the rest of the guys. And that’s how he came to settle in Heart Valley, where he farmed his 320 acres until 1939. We had the usual trials and tribulations as farmers - some good crops, some poor ones, some hail storms, prairie fire, caterpillar plague, rabbit plague, and some extremely cold winters. We also had good times - community picnics and sports days, Christmas concerts and dances at the school (dances for which my dad and I used to play music - violin and guitar), and friendly neighbours to visit and play cards with. One significant happening took place (I believe) in the early to mid 1930’s, when a number of German people arrived to take up land in Heart Valley. I recall Fred Light, Hans Schmidt, Joseph Renner, Mr. Kless (who’d been a banker in Germany and spoke 7 languages), Eherhardt Koeppen, Hans Boeske and a very dear couple, Mr. and Mrs. Rozinsky and their son Otto. Mrs. Rozinsky came to our place to look after us a couple of times when my parents were away, and I recall her teaching my brother and me how to count in German, and she did all my mother’s mending and patching to keep herself busy. I understand that Mr. Rozinsky is still living and is in the old folks home in Grande Prairie.

I went to High School in Grande Prairie in 1937, 1938 and 1939. I recall that many of the boys who were in the same class as myself were heading out to Edmonton on the train, in June of 1939, to see if they could get into the army. In those days most people were aware of Hitler and Mussolini, and I recall a fellow who lived on the next farm west of us, old Jack Murray. I believe his son, Pete, still lives in Heart Valley. Old Jack used to read Hansard and spout lots of politics, but he was forever getting the names wrong and he always called Hitler and Mussolini ‘HILTER and MOZELENE’ which used to amuse my father every time he heard him say it. It seemed that almost every person was a character of some sort: Scotty McWherter, Pete McKnee, Mr. Cox, who always seemed to be wearing a too large and too long overcoat, Knobby Clark, who was in the army with my dad and used to come galloping into the yard on a high spirited horse whenever he came to visit. He usually had something for the kids - gum or candy but also always



Maurice Pearson's 1st Birthday. Standing, Left to Right: MacDonald's hired girl, Olive McLean, Eileen McLean, Nancy Pearson, and Sylvia Morrison. Sitting: Grace MacDonald, Victor MacDonald, Maurice Pearson, and Murray girl from Wanham.

seemed to be in a hurry, as though the sheriff were not too far behind him. There was Joe Testewik, an Indian fellow who used to come on horseback too and always brought my mother a big roast of moose or deer meat, but I don't ever recall knowing where he lived or where he came from. There was Percy Close, whose land joined my fathers on the southeast corner, but he was never there; and our neighbour on the east side, old Don Morrison who used to make fantastic cushion tops with wool, but he had a crooked little finger on one hand, and never seemed to get around to getting his farming done.

There was a fellow named Frank Smith, whose land joined ours on the north side and he had a housekeeper all the time. Ladies who came from Edmonton were something of a novelty to us kids because they always had fancy clothes and wore lots of makeup. However, Mr. Smith had 2 bad fires that I recall and burned his farm buildings and even his horses were lost in the fires. Then he sort of disappeared.

Then there was 'Old Barber, the horse trader' who lived across the Bad Heart. He used to stop by once in awhile in his travels, but my dad was always a little cautious about making any deals with him. Then there was a neighbour on the west, who came from around Innisfail when he moved to the place - Billy Simpson. Later it was old Jack Murray who got Simpson's place. Later (I don't know how many years he lived there) he packed up his whole outfit and moved to Hudson Hope. He loaded everything on wagons and drove his cattle from horseback, and everybody said he was crazy. But to us kids it seemed like it would be a great adventure, and secretly we wished we could have gone along on the cattle drive.

THE RAWLEIGH MAN

Then there was McDougall, the Rawleigh man. He was somewhat of a sensation when he arrived with his Ford touring car with the black curtains all around. Some of the guys gave him a bad time by jacking up the back end of his car and putting blocks under it while he was making a sale (I believe at Mitchell's place). Then when he came out and couldn't figure out what went wrong with his car, they thought it was a great joke.

There were the Starratts, who lived across the Kadot, away to the east end of the settlement. They moved away too, as I recall and went to Ontario where they operated an airline. I believe they came back once for a visit and there was a big gathering at the Meadus place so everyone could visit with them. I believe there were some pictures taken of that group of people. There were the Wellmans, who lived near the old road, where it came up out of the Kadot on the Peoria side. Mr. Wellman was a sort of horse doctor, as I recall.

COLD CLOTHS AND PRAYERS

But the thing that I remember most is the son who died of meningitis. I believe the ladies of the district used to take turns at helping Mrs. Wellman when the boy was ill, because he had to be looked after 24 hours a day. We were left home whenever my mother went to help. I can

recall how upset she'd be when she came home because there wasn't much they could do for the boy, except to try to relieve his pain with cold cloths and prayers.

There were also people who touched our lives in other ways, such as the student preachers who used to spend the summer in our district. I recall Mr. Kitney who married Miss Sellers, who taught school for a year or two in Heart Valley. Then there were the missionary ladies, and I recall Miss Hassel and Miss Sayle, who travelled in a sort of Land Rover van and spent some time camping at our place. Then there was Mrs. Ledingham, who came from Vancouver, and a dear little lady with glasses whose name I can't recall. They used to come to the school and conduct mission band, and we'd learn Bible verses and get little cards with verses on them, if we knew what we were supposed to learn. After my parents moved to Vancouver in 1939, they stayed in Mrs. Ledingham's house and helped care for her, when she got too old to look after herself.



The Art Peebles farm home.

ART PEEBLES AND FAMILY

Art Peebles came to the Grande Prairie area, over the Edson Trail in March of 1912, with his parents. He resided in Grande Prairie until he was 15 years old, at which time he left home to fend for himself.

On his 18th birthday, July 15, 1920 he filed on a quarter section homestead of bush and trees in the Heart Valley District.

By breaking ten acres for his brother, he obtained the use of Harold's horses and breaking plow. With these Art managed to clear and break 3 acres for himself, the following summer.

Art's shack was built of logs with a sod roof. So when it rained one can imagine the mess from a dripping roof, and it rained lots those days. He had to work out to make a living, but each summer managed to put in his 3 months residence per year (as specified in his contract), until the 3 years were up with 30 acres under cultivation.

In December, 1929, Art and I (Emma Myrland) were married, the winter when the bottom fell out of everything. Luckily, that fall Art got the mail contract for 3 years which helped out immensely financially, but still had to barter or trade at times to get along. (Eg. calves for lumber, etc.)

HAROLD PEEBLES

I'll never forget the winter 1934-35, when we were so hard up - didn't know which way to turn - when lo and behold, one day a bridge foreman and his two helpers came to our door. They were looking for a place to board and an extra man with a team of horses, to help build a new bridge over the creek by our place. We welcomed them with open arms, they were a God send, and in no time we had a good supply of food on hand.

Two sons were born, Kenneth Arthur and Leslie Harold. They are married and have 2 sons and one daughter each.

Art tried to join the army in 1942, but was turned down, due to heart condition. In 1945 he became weed Inspector for I.D. 132 (Now I.D. 19), and in 1953 he was appointed Field Supervisor to the Agricultural Service Board in I.D. 132, which post he held until his death in October, 1961.

OVER THE BRIDGE

In November, 1953, Art had an accident which could have cost him his life, but fortunately he escaped with 3 broken ribs, a few bruises and a week in hospital. It was a very foggy day, roads slick with ice, having rained the night before and froze. While driving west from home on his way to Spirit River, he skidded into a Dept. of Highways truck parked on the side of the road, puncturing the radiator. Then he had to be towed. All went well until they reached the creek, one half mile from Highway No. 2. Going down the hill went fine, then the man stepped on the gas in order to make the other side so the slack in the chain tightened with a jerk, whipping the car over the edge of the bridge, upside down, to the frozen ground below. Art managed to crawl out, through a small hole where the windshield had been, and was helped up to a waiting car and taken to hospital.

Art played the guitar in an orchestra with 2 other Arts - Art Johnson, who played the violin, and Art Tansem, who played the drums, together with Marie McLean on piano.



Art, Emma, Kenneth and Leslie.

Harold Peebles was born in Tweed, Ontario, in 1899. In the spring of 1912, the family came to the Peace country over the Edson Trail. They settled on a farm near Bear Lake, a few miles northwest of where Grande Prairie is now.

At age seventeen, Harold joined the army and was in the Bugler Corps until he turned eighteen. There was only one year of World War I left, which he spent as a private in England. While there, he met and married a girl from Birmingham, England, Emmie David. They both came back to Canada after the war. Harold filed on a homestead in Heart Valley, ten miles south and half a mile west of Wanham S.W. 1/4 21-76-3-6.

It was a real challenge for Mrs. Peebles to come all the way from England to make a home in this new land. The first few months their home was a tent. By that fall they had built a three room log house.

Harold and Emmie raised four children, three boys and one girl. In 1934 the family moved into a large two storey house built by Gus Dofher. The house was later moved to Grande Prairie, about 1955, where it remains in sound condition.

During World War II, Mr. Peebles worked for the Legion, operating a canteen. Later he ran a shooting gallery. He also had a very unusual 'taxi' and ambulance — a type of snow-plane on skis, with room for four passengers. This worked very well when so few roads were ploughed.



The Harold Peebles family - 1936. Back Row, Left to Right: George, Art, Emmie and Henry. Front Row: Ruth and Alton.

During that time, Percy MacDougal stayed on the farm to care for the animals and chores. 'Mac', as he was known to friends, was a bachelor who later settled on a homestead three miles south of Peebles.

The oldest son, George, joined the army in World War II and spent five years overseas. The second son, Henry, was in the airforce and died in action over France.

Harold and Emmie moved to Wanham in 1950, where Harold managed the Frontier Lumber Co. until his death in 1960. Mrs. Peebles then moved back to Grande Prairie and ran a boarding house, until her move to Swanhaven Nursing Home in 1978.

Her children, George and Alton and their wives, also Ruth and her husband also live in Grande Prairie. There are sixteen grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.



Harold Peebles with his snowplane taxi and ambulance - Grande Prairie - 1948.

LEE J. PHILLIPS

by Emma Phillips

On New Years day, 1949, we came to Belloy from Enilda, having purchased the General Store from Mrs. Archibald. We found a very friendly community and in a short time it seemed we knew the majority of people from Spirit River to Watino.

In the early years of the '50's the population must have doubled - with the arrival of veterans to land cleared by the government, known as the 'Lassiter Project'.

Each community held many socials, gatherings such as dances, picnics, ball games, and curling in winter. Competition and rivalry was keen and spirits high, so good and enjoyable times were had by all.

Many were still coming to shop or to the railroad with wagon or sleigh, depending on the season. At this time, there were still hitching racks in most communities.

Our family consisted of Lee, myself, Lee's father, and our son Marvin. We were raised on the prairies east of Calgary - I, in an area known as Wintering Hills, and Lee, in ranch country - Crawling Valley. We got our mail at Hussar and had taken our schooling in one room schools.

On completion of my high school, I entered nurses training in the fall of 1930 in Edmonton. Lee, with his dad and mother, sold their ranch and came north to Fort Assiniboine in 1931. When I finished my training, Lee and I were married in Barrhead.

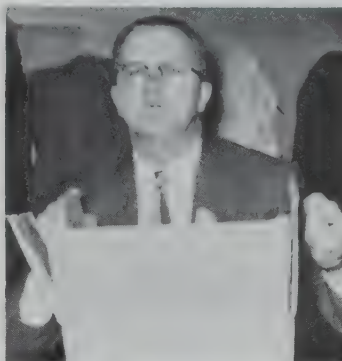
D.W. Phillips passed away in March, 1956, at the age of eighty-six and is buried in High Prairie.

As roads and transportation improved, (better cars) many went farther away from home for shopping and entertainment. The schools became centralized. A way of life changed. Scotts' Garage became the centre for men congregating, as the new Studebaker trucks and cars came pouring in. We tore out the posts of the hitching rack and did not replace them.

Time changes and we found, as many small towns did during the next few years, that it was time to look for greener pastures. We moved our business to Chetwynd B.C. I guess we were about the first to go.

Marvin married Brigett Listhaeghe from Silverwood and they lived in Chetwynd until the fall of 1968. They have been living in Fort Nelson since 1972, working for B.C. Hydro. They have four children - Cindy, Marvin, Ward and Rick.

We live in Dawson Creek. Lee belongs to the Eaglesham Golf Club, so we keep in touch with old friends.



Lee Phillips



Emma Phillips

JOHN PIEROG

Attention given to production of quality farm products paid off for John Pierog. In ten years he raised a partly developed homestead to one of the most advanced farms in the Belloy District.

The whole family are firm believers in the value of seed fairs and exhibitions as an incentive to raise the quality of grain produced on farms. Numerous times the family has entered seed samples in fairs and brought home prizes, as a reward for their efforts.

When John first came to the district in 1945, he had already proved up one homestead in the Tangent District, where he settled as a young married man in 1937.

Just newly arrived from Poland, where he was born, John had to start in a small way when he first came to the homestead in the Peace River country. When he came here he had only a team of horses and three head of cattle to start his farm in the north. By the year 1955, he began to supplement his grain production by starting a herd of quality cattle.

In the early years he had little in the way of farm machinery and had to depend on borrowing the implements owned by his better established neighbors, to break and sow his first few acres of land.

So with his trusty team and many long hours of hard work he began to make a home in the isolated northland, so far away from his homeland.

Fortunately, he said, building materials in the district were free at that time, and all it cost a settler to have a house and barn was the work of cutting logs in the bush and putting up the necessary buildings.

Poor roads, connecting the area with other settlements

in the district, made John decide to move to a more developed neighborhood, rather than wait for improvements to come to the district during the coming years.

John, his wife Pauline, and their children moved to the Belloy farm in 1945, settling on a quarter section that was at the time only half under cultivation and boasted only a barn and a two-roomed pioneer-style log cabin.

Despite bush fires that had raged through the district in previous years, there was still plenty of heavy forest left on the land that had to be cleared. It was difficult work, made harder because John was still farming with horses.

Change over to power equipment came in 1948, when John bought his first tractor and started compiling a line-up of power implements to go with it.

As he kept increasing his machinery for the new tractor, he sold the then outdated horses, a few at a time, until the last one left the farm in the winter of 1955.

Now John depended on the farm truck, while a tractor and rack was used to haul the hay on the place, which was baled. Power machinery has fairly well replaced the horse on the Pierog farm.

During the past years the whole family has supported 4-H work in the community, with each of the children as they arrived at the proper age joining the district club.

Now the pioneer farm has developed into a section of land with 540 acres under cultivation. John always placed heavy emphasis on grass seeds and forage crops, both for their value, as feed and as a means of building up the soil, which becomes worn out with the growing of only grain crops.

John and Pauline now live in Grande Prairie, happily retired. Son Edward, his wife Mary, and their two children live on a farm, the home place near Belloy.

Two more sons, Ted and Tony, each married and with families, live and work in Grande Prairie. Daughter, Vicki, (Yaremko) is married and lives at Tangent.



Left to Right: John Pierog, Russell Bell and George Gilmour.



Friends at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kasprow. Left to Right: Mrs. Kasprow, Pauline Pierog, Anna Kane, Christina Sinkevich.



John, Pauline and Edward in registered Marcus wheat crop - 1948.

Vickie



A Lot of Bull - John Pierog and Vickie, 1959.

A FEW RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LIFE OF WILFRED PLAYDON SPENT IN WANHAM, ALBERTA, 1932 - 43

In the year 1932, Ernest Playdon - section foreman of the Northern Alberta Railroad at Clairmont, Alberta, was transferred from Clairmont to Wanham, Alberta. Ernest, his wife Winifred, with three sons and one daughter, arrived at the tiny railroad station on the eleventh day of November, 1932. We were welcomed by the Station agent, his wife and family (Ernie and Mrs. Trump), who, during our stay of ten years, were our good friends and neighbours. Wanham was indeed a charming little hamlet, surrounded by pine trees that were alive with squirrels, prairie chickens, some bears, moose and deer.

The railway station and section house were quite close together and was a nice little walk to the post office and two stores, one owned by Pete Tansem - the other by Mr. Blonski. Both stores were always well stocked with produce, groceries, sugar, to coal oil. Yes, reminds one of filling the lamps and shining the chimney glass every morning. Again, memories of looking out of the section house window in early morning seeing only smoke coming from every chimney in the sleepy little place. But at 8:30 a.m. boys and girls began walking up the road to the little red one room school at the top of the hill, often at twenty or thirty below zero.

Two very important and special people lived at the top of the hill: In the Nurses Home and Medical Clinic, Doctor Johnstone, a lovely English lady doctor, who watched the wagon loads of wheat come into town in the fall of the year. Horses and dogs drank at her well - Doctor would welcome them, and gently wash the dogs eyes and noses.

The other important person, Art Ramsfield, owned a farm with the only well of excellent drinking water, that he brought around town in a covered tank drawn by horses. For this service he charged fifty cents a barrel. He came around twice a week with fresh water.

Back in town again, remembering how fortunate Wanham was to have a man like Ralph Pickard, who lived with his mother at the edge of town. He was the village blacksmith, and boys coming home from school always spent a moment or two watching the sparks fly upward, as he prepared shoes for the horses.

We had a post office, which did very good service for Wanham, West Vale, and surrounding districts. Mr. Harrington senior, was our very good postmaster, whose son Ed Harrington, took over after his father.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacobson owned the only restaurant in town. Mrs. Jacobson was an excellent cook, while Nels dished out ice cream in cones for the kids, and did fine as a waiter. He was the kindest of neighbours, who went out in twenty below zero weather to dig a grave for my wee one day old son. It was as though we were closer than neighbours. Doctor Johnstone bringing the child into the world - Art Ramsfield, making a wee casket; Doctor, Mr. Jacobson, Art Ramsfield and all the neighbours sending gifts to comfort sorrowing parents.

It would be hard to forget Mrs. Prevost, a widow lady



Mrs. Playdon

who owned what I think was the nicest home in town. Maybe because of the swing for four people, who could sit and enjoy tea in her garden. Mrs. Prevost had children, Ed the eldest son, being the first man to sell oil in Wanham, as far as I can remember. Believe me, it was well worth it to walk from the section house to town, just to meet and greet these interesting and wonderful people.

About a mile or more north of the section house and railway station lived a good friend and neighbour, Mr. and Mrs. Laughy and family. Bill, their eldest son, was a friend of my eldest son. He used to visit our home every Saturday night in the winter. He had a radio and the boys used to listen to the hockey games, the Toronto Maple Leafs being the favourites. When they won the game, it was the end of a good day.

The most important events that ever happened in Wanham, when we were living there, was the building and opening of the Presbyterian and Catholic Churches around the year 1935-39, where the young people were married, and where we were able to have services for our dead. Before this time services were held in Mr. Pete Tansem's home, the minister coming in from Grande Prairie. Our first minister in the new church was a woman, a deaconess named Miss Grigor, who did wonderful work. She was a woman of great courage, and it was my pleasure to work with her. Hundreds of pairs of socks and mitts, and also baby outfits for the new babies born were given to homesteaders who had so little and lived so far from town. Miss Grigor purchased a horse and buggy so that she could visit these courageous people, who were first to open up that wonderful country.

A BABY AND A CALF

Many of the garments and baby clothes were sent to Wanham from the Ladies Aids of east Canadian churches. Doctor Johnstone was a frequent visitor of these brave people. She told me of one time a homesteader came to get her. His wife was expecting a baby real soon. She went miles into the country and arrived in time to deliver the child. It was a one room shack. The man was

FRANK AND OLGA PODRUZNY

so poor, he had only one cow who that morning, had a wee calf. An accident at birth caused it to fall and break its leg. The man was so unhappy. He had it on a bundle of straw in the corner of the house. After caring for mother and child, Doctor put a splint on the calf's leg. When she went back, mother and baby were fine, and the little calf was walking. It was near the Christmas season. Doctor said she enjoyed being in that humble home with Father, Mother and baby, calf and straw. I reminded her of another day, and place - a Father, Mother, and babe, lying in a manger.

This man and family, like many others, became successful farmers. Growing and selling their wheat, bringing it to the elevator; so they lived and prospered.



Cliff Playdon and Cliff Tansem with horse "Big Mike".

Around the year 1938-39 a new political party came into being in Alberta called the Social Credit Party. Mr. Aberhart of Calgary was the founder, and became the Premier. The ladies of Wanham and surrounding districts attended meetings in different homes in the afternoons. I still look with interest at my old Social Credit Bank Book. Mr. Joe Hauser of Wanham was our banker, who transferred the money to Grande Prairie. The Parlee's of West Vale came often to Wanham. Mr. Parlee Sr. was a friend of the people, always willing to open his home for Church services.

The Laughy's and Metz's and Mr. Pepper, north of the track, and all the old timers, we knew, were and are surely the salt of the earth-preserving a way of life that was good.

My wish for Wanham and surrounding districts is that the same courage and determination to make things go as the oldtimers did may continue.

COST OF LIVING - 1932

One loaf of bread	10 cents
One pound of butter	25 cents
One dozen eggs	10 cents
Section Foreman wages	58 3/4 cents per hour
Men hired for summer work on Section	25 cents per hour

At the end of World War II, Frank Podruzny returned home to Ryley, Alberta. He had spent five years in the army with R.C.E. and R.C.A.S.C., four of the five being spent overseas. A short time later, he started working in the Yukon, returning home for the Christmas holidays in 1946.

On January 10, 1947, Frank came to Wanham and went to work for Lassiters Ltd., at their camp across the Burnt River. He worked for Lassiters off and on for the next four years, having filed on a homestead in the fall of 1947.

Frank and Olga were married in Edmonton on June 4, 1949, and moved to their farm two weeks later.

Farming on the project was no easy task in the early fifties, as all the people in the area in those days will agree. Most families stayed on the farm in the summer and went out to work in the winter.

In the winter of 1950-51, Frank and Olga moved to Edmonton where he worked. Their first son, David, was born on February 18, 1951, in the Royal Alex Hospital. That spring when they came back to the farm, which was located one mile north and two miles east of Wanham, they bought their first car. It was a Model-A Ford, purchased from the late Bill Trumpower.

During the next few years, Frank farmed between jobs, and Olga was busy gardening, root-picking and raising a family. Their only daughter, Judy, was born in Grande Prairie on March 4, 1954.

During this time, they got to know some of their wonderful neighbors, some of them old-timers, and some new arrivals like themselves. They were sure they had picked the right area to raise their family, and this was proved a short time later.

WHAT THE HECK!

During the winter of 1955-56, Frank was working in a logging camp south of Dawson Creek, B.C. On February 6th he had an accident that resulted in a crushed foot. He spent the next three months in Vancouver receiving



Frank and Olga Podruzny - 25th Anniversary.

Frank Podruzny - Zone Commander of the Royal Canadian Legion.



treatment. He arrived back in Wanham on May 24th on crutches, with a walking cast. The next morning at six o'clock, Frank was awakened by a friend, the late Ernie Gouchee. He said he was looking for Ken McCallum's place, so Frank got up and showed him the short-cut to Ken and Jo's place. Before Frank returned to the house, two tractors with plows drove into his field. He thought, "What the heck! Can't they use the road?" In the next few minutes more tractors with implements rolled in and it dawned on him. It was a work bee! Frank was overcome with emotion. Friends and neighbors came from near and far - a total of 22 tractors and one cat. They plowed up 200 acres of alfalfa ground, worked it down, and seeded it that day. The ladies provided a big noon meal for all.

Frank was a legion member, but not too active. Now that he was laid up, he decided to change that. He was elected as secretary-treasurer to Wanham branch R.C.L., and a Branch Service Officer, which office he held until 1961, at which time a new secretary-treasurer was elected, namely, Dick Green. Next he was president and B.S.O. for fourteen years. He also served on the Wanham and I.D. 19 Regional Recreation Board, the Advisory Board and the Agricultural Service Board. He resigned from the Service Board in 1979, as his civic duties were becoming time consuming and a detriment to his farming operation.

SCHOOL TURMOIL

During the late fifties and early sixties, we had some turmoil in the Spirit River School Division, and Frank served for two terms on the local school board. We were very fortunate to have dedicated teachers in Wanham during all this time. We sometimes take them for granted, but they are in fact, unsung heroes in our community. If it were not for some of our dedicated teachers, we would have lost our high school, and many of our students that completed their high school in Wanham, might have

dropped out.

During all this time, Olga was not sitting idle. Their family had increased - two more sons - Ronnie, born on June 24, 1959 in Spirit River, and Alexander (Alex) born December 4, 1961, also in Spirit River. She was, and still is active in the Ladies Auxiliary to the R.C.L. - Branch No. 120. She served on the executive (in various offices) of the C.W.L. in Wanham St. Patrick's Parish, and later as treasurer and Librarian for Wanham Community Library. Lately she has taken a part time job at the M & F Store, so her time for community services is more limited.

Olga and Frank are home alone most of the time, now; their children moved out to find jobs elsewhere. Their oldest son, David, married Faye Kennedy of Kelsey, Alberta in 1971. David and Faye both have degrees in Physio-Chemistry. They later moved to Ottawa, where they both worked for the Federal government. They have one daughter, Nadia, and Frank and Olga are very proud grandparents.

Judy is a school teacher and is now working and living in Langley, B.C. Ronnie finished high school in Wanham and is presently working in Grande Prairie, so he is able to come home on week-ends.

Alex, the youngest in the family, is interested in professional sports. At this time he is in pursuit of a baseball career, going to Yakima College in the state of Washington, U.S.A. He may move back to Alberta to complete his four years of University.

Frank and Olga farm more land now than they did in 1949. They moved closer to Wanham, so their family could participate in community and school extra curricular activities.

Frank is still keeping busy. He is a regional representative (for the west portion of I.D.'s in Peace River area) on the Executive Council of the Alberta Association of Improvement Districts. He is a charter member and president of that association. He is also Zone Commander of the R.C.L., Alberta - N.W.T. Command, Zone No. 2, District No. 1.



The Podruzny Family - August, 1981. Left to Right: David, Alex, Ron, Frank, Olga and Judy.



FRANK PODRUZYNY

*From "The Municipal Counsellor"
July 1981*

On May 25, 1956 a knock came to the door of Frank Podruzny's farmhouse near Wanham. Frank hobbled out on crutches — he'd recently been involved in an accident while working at his seasonal 'catskinning' job — to give directions to a neighbouring farmhouse.

But before he was finished a curious sight caught his eye. A set of headlights, quickly joined by another and another were headed across his field. They were the lights of 22 tractors and one cat belonging to friends and neighbours who had come to put in Frank's crop that year.

That was perhaps a turning point in the life of Frank Podruzny. "I decided right then I had to pay people back. If I could just, in part, serve some of the people that way."

And so, being a founding father of the Alberta Association of Improvement Districts was just one of his ways of serving his community. Some six years ago he became the first vice chairman of the association. Then at the first official meeting, the chairman resigned, the organizational structure changed somewhat and Frank became the first president of the AAID — a position he held for two years.

"A main purpose was to bring (department of municipal affairs) administration people and advisory councils together on a more frequent basis," says Frank, "And to make the people more aware of municipal problems. We have some unique problems that aren't province wide. It's impossible to cover all subjects in an annual ratepayers meeting. The advisory councils can talk to ratepayers out in the field."

If service was his goal, Frank accomplished it. Physical proof is a plaque presented to him at the last AAID annual Conference by the minister of municipal affairs for his dedicated service as president of the association.

"For the first time I was stuck for words," says Frank.

"On behalf of all the people who worked with me, I am by all means proud to accept it. But just as one person — well, I had so much help from the department, as well as the association."

Frank admits that he has to take it easier now than he used to. A son has taken over the farm and he and his wife enjoy travelling to visit another son and daughter in Washington state.

An ex-army man, Frank was involved in the Legion and served for 14 years as its president and three years as zone commander. And this spring he and his wife Olga were honored for that service during a special appreciation night.

In addition he's been a successful farmer and raised four children. And his relationships in both business and with friends seem to be exemplified by an experience he had when he first began farming. He had been working seasonally with the airforce in the Yukon but when he quit, the cheques didn't. He kept receiving requests from the airforce to pick the cheques up anyway; afterall it would be cheaper to give him the money than to reprocess them. When he replied that he just couldn't do it, the response of a government official was "Of all the people in the country, we have to run into someone who's honest!"

Perhaps Frank's greatest love is for the people of Wanham, a small community located about 90 km northeast of Grande Prairie, which he proudly points out as the 'ploughing capital of Alberta'.

"The only thing is they kicked me out of the choir," jokes Frank who speaks only in a whisper. "But they invited me back for 'Silent Night'".

It's difficult to isolate Frank Podruzny's life from the history of the association. For the past six years he's worked to make it an avenue to further the interests of the individual ratepayer. But a little deeper digging turns up other ways he's been serving his community.

When he talks about health problems, he's not just referring to the catskinning accident in '56. About a year ago it was discovered that he had cancer in the left lung and partially in the esophagus. At the time the prognosis was that he had only three months to live.

But if there's one thing he hasn't given up, it's that one goal that seems to be the theme for his life: "I would just like to repay those people who always seem to be there when you need them."

Frank passed away in October 1981. -(ED. NOTE)



JOHN AND GRACE PODRUZNY FAMILY

by Grace Podruzny

We moved to the Wanham area in 1950, with our oldest son Robert, then two and a half years old.

John had served three and a half years in the army in the Second World War and we got married in Glasgow, Scotland, in November, 1945. John was discharged from the army March, 1946, and I came to Canada as a war bride in August, 1946.

We farmed in the Holden District for two years, and Robert was born in Edmonton September 14, 1947. We didn't have much luck with farming at that time - what with drought, then hail, so we decided to go back to Edmonton and get a job.

In the spring of 1949 we heard of land being opened up for veterans (Lassiter Project) in the Wanham area, so we thought we would try farming again. We settled one mile north and two miles east of Wanham on N.E. 11-78-3, and we bought an old log house originally owned by Erling Borseth. During that time, there was no road past our place, so we often went to town on the old John Deere - D tractor or walked.

HOW'S THAT AGAIN?

Since I was from the city, I didn't know a thing about farming or gardening. John often talks about the time he told me I had planted the beans upside down and I believed him! What really amazed me about gardening was when we planted a tiny turnip seed we would get a big turnip, or a few carrot seeds produced sacks of lovely big carrots, - but a farmer would put his crop in, worry all summer about drought, hail or frost, and in the fall he took off the same little seeds he had planted in the first place. That took a few hours explaining! I think I have learned a few things since then.

The land at that time was poor; the wheat went about five bushels to the acre in a good year, so we went to work in the winter months at Nillson Bros. Sawmill south of Grande Prairie John as a millwright and I as a cook's helper (flunky). It was hard work, but we enjoyed it and the extra money helped with the farm expenses. I also had a trip back to Scotland in 1953, to see my family. Robert had started school and during the winter months in camp, he took his schooling through correspondence and did very well.

Our second son, Arthur, was born in Sexsmith, September 24, 1954, and we still remember the day we brought him home; it was snowing and no crop off yet. However, after a few days the famous Alberta sun shone, we had Indian summer for a while, and we got our harvesting done.

In the summer of 1956, my mother came for a visit from Scotland so we went to meet her in our 1954 Dodge, which we were so proud of. Also that same year, John was offered a job in Valemount, British Columbia, at Johnson's Sawmill as the millwright and later on as the sawyer. We came back to Wanham every spring and fall to do the farming.

During that time, our third son, Brian, was born at Jasper, Alberta, March 31, 1959. Jasper, at that time,

was the closest hospital to Valemount. By this time Robert and Arthur were both in school and we found it difficult to travel back and forth all the time. Since the farming spirit was still in John, we moved back to Wanham in the spring of 1960, to stay.

We now had electricity and a cold water tap in the old house that we thought was wonderful, as we never thought we would ever have a luxury like that on a farm. The land was producing better through the rotating of grass seed such as alfalfa and clover, so we bought another half section from Delbert Wells, E 1/2 18-78-2, originally owned by Gordon MacDonald.

The weather co-operated the next few years and the crops were quite good, so we bought another quarter section; again from Delbert Wells, S.W.-12-78-3. In the spring of 1964, we started on the basement of our new home; John and Robert laying the cement blocks. Then the rains came. That summer was one of the wettest years we can remember, and it didn't stop until we had the roof on. We completed the house in 1966, and moved in two weeks before Easter, sloshing through the mud with our belongings.

Robert completed his schooling, went on to University and married Edna Kuzik from Egremont, Alberta. He graduated as a Chartered Accountant, and they are presently living in Toronto with their two children, Tyson and Shauna.

During these years we became active as curlers, trying to take in every bonspiel we could, and really enjoying it. In the out-of-town bonspiels, I played lead for Faye Jacobsen (skip); Gloria Feniak (third) and Floris White.



John Podruzny



Grace Podruzny

We had added another half section to our farming by this time, buying the W 1/2 18-72-2 from Jim Watson. About this time we thought we could get rich faster if we bought some pigs for market, so John built a '5 Star Motel' as he called it, for them. We had them for over a year before they were ready for market - John thought we should have a birthday party for them! It wasn't until we were told to throw them out and let them roll in the dirt, that they fattened up. After that we stayed strictly to grain farming.

Arthur and Brian were completing their schooling and both were active in sports. Summer was baseball time and we became real baseball fans, seldom missing a game.

After Arthur completed his grade 12, he went to work in Grande Prairie and married Debra Zahara. They have two girls, Crystal and Nicole.

In 1978, Arthur and Brian decided to go farming, so they bought a section of land from Ken and Jo McCallum and a half section from Robert White.

In 1979, we decided to semi-retire in Salmon Arm, British Columbia. Although we hated to leave our family and friends, we knew that we would be coming back to Wanham often.

THE PRANSKATS

Mr. William Albert Pranskat arrived at South Hampton, England, by ship. From England he came by ship to Quebec. From there he travelled to Wetaskiwin, Alberta by train. He then made his way to Lacombe, Alberta, where he met some people that spoke his language.

One of the first people he met was William J. Rotacker who later built and operated a sawmill and employed a lot of people. But before he moved on to the Peace River country, he got a job on a farm at Bentley. There he worked for a year from the spring of 1927 to the next spring of 1928. His bride-to-be came to Canada six months later in the fall of 1927. On January 7, 1928, he married Martha Jasopiet. The following year, 1929, he took a homestead in the Peoria District which was named



The Pranskat family in 1945. Left to Right: Lony, Mrs. Pranskat, Mr. Pranskat, Helmuth, Elly and Lloyd. Missing: Lucy.

by an early pioneer by the name of Olaf Toftner who came from Peoria, Illinois, U.S.A.

William Pranskat farmed in the Peoria District for 34 years.

After he filed for his homestead, he built a small one room shack in the middle of a big bush. Mr. Pranskat had to go and work out every day while his wife, Martha, stayed in the shack till he would come home late in the evening. Many times she would be scared to death to see bears roaming around the shack and looking into the windows.

CAT AND THE BEAR

They had a small shed where they had a cow inside, and the bear crawled up on the roof trying to get to the cow. Mrs. Pranskat took a cat and walked towards the bear and threw the cat at him. The bear took after the cat. The cat scurried up a tree and Martha ran quickly back into the shack.

This is just one of the wild experiences they had in those days.

However, as years passed on, he managed to clear a few acres of land every year by hand till he finally had it all cleared and broke. The breaking was done with horses and later with an old tractor, but most of his farming was done with horses.

He was a great lover of animals especially horses and he did keep a team until his retirement.

He raised a family of five children: Lloyd, Lucy, Elly, Helmuth and Lony. Mr. Pranskat was always cheerful and willing to help his neighbours when he saw someone bogged down in the mud and there was lots of it in those days. He retired in 1963 and moved to the town of Wanham where he resided until his passing in 1970. He was predeceased by a son, Helmuth, in 1969.

WANHAM HISTORY

by Ed. H. Prevost

In the beginning was GRIZZLY BEAR PRAIRIE. And where was that? A place with a name like that must be wild and ... The wooly part of it would be the woollens you wore early in the fall and all winter, for it's cold up north. But do you know something? We loved that part of the world.

Grizzly Bear Prairie was that part of the Peace River country from Tangent to and including Prestville, Alberta, near Rycroft.

In the early part of 1915 my father, E.D. Prevost Sr., left Estevan, Saskatchewan, for a trip up to northern Alberta for the purpose of finding suitable homesteads with two of his brothers, Alphonse Prevost and Joseph M. Prevost. Six homesteads were required, and they had to be all in one block, for the intention was to form a farm company to farm and ranch together.

All of the Prevosts were experienced lumber men and farmers. The three arrived at Falher and were fortunate

in finding a place to live two miles south of town with a farmer who had an extra house. He really was anxious for the Prevost brothers to settle in his part of the district, and therefore went all out to help them search for the right land, where there was good soil, good pasture, and water.

After wandering all over that part of the country and seeing a lot of good land, they could not find what they needed. They were also looking for a good tract of timber for lumbering, so it was decided to look elsewhere.

Acting on advice from an old farmer from Ohio, U.S.A., by the name of Wilfred Cyr, who had taken up a homestead just a few miles S.W. of Wanham, they went to Wanham. There with the help of L. Leriger (Albert Leriger's grandfather) they found the perfect area. Six homesteads all together, only 1 1/2 miles from the Birch Hills with lots of spruce trees and birch trees for lumber. A good creek was going through 3 of the homesteads. That creek could have a couple of dams built on it for lots of water, and nearby land that could be leased for hay and pasture. The right set-up, and only 5 1/2 miles from Wanham, in the Grizzly Bear Prairie!

Two of the brothers stayed to put up a cook house and diner, also a tent for an office and a couple of other tents for the company families. E.D. Prevost immediately returned to Estevan to send up his other two brothers with settler's effects - a lot of machinery and some cattle and horses. He gathered a few more head of cattle to be shipped later on.

Two weeks later my father and mother, with all of us children and my grandfather, left Estevan for Mile 3 X X, which in the spring of 1916 was called Wanham. My father had managed, in that short time, to wind up his business at Estevan but it was necessary for him to return to Estevan, Saskatchewan, from time to time.

The train travelled slowly from Edmonton north, as this was a new railway and also the spring of the year, when the road-bed was a bit soft. It was a long trip but mother had filled a large basket and a suitcase full of food and pop. Children always like to look at scenery, and quite often we saw a moose or coyote.

The train made several stops naturally, but stopped less and less as we neared Watino.

We arrived at Watino the next day, about 13 hours after leaving Edmonton. The train stopped there for over an hour to enable passengers to run over to the restaurant for a meal and to the store for food, etc. We also enjoyed some entertainment by two young black bears. They were tethered by 6 foot chains a short distance from each other to two sturdy posts of about 8 or 9" in diameter and 5 feet tall. The bears would roll over, climb the posts, jump down, growl and try to reach each other but couldn't, therefore swore at each other in their language. It was fun for adults and children to watch their antics. Finally the whistle blew and the conductor hollered the famous words, ALL ABOARD!

The old engine seemed to be doing a lot of puffing going up the hill but we soon levelled off, and occasionally the whistle would blow. The conductor told us it was to scare moose or bear off the track. We then arrived at Belloy. The train stopped and a Mr. Smith, an elderly man a bit stooped shouldered, came over and got

a mail bag from the baggage man and spoke a few words. Nobody got off at Belloy. (It wasn't called Belloy then but Grizzly Bear.) Mr. Smith carried his mail bag to his store and post office. He also had another small building close by which he rented to people waiting for the train. (Sometimes you waited for the train a long time in those days.)

We left Grizzly Bear and Dad said, "Better put your shoes on kids, we will soon be reaching our destination, Mile 3 X X."

Then the train stopped and Dad said "Here's where we get off." My mother looked out the window and said, "Mon dieu!" Is it possible? Look, only big trees - no houses." So Dad said, "Well it's just as I said it would be. You'll love it after awhile." So my mother said, "Let us offer a prayer of thanksgiving for having arrived safely over this rough, long journey from Edmonton."

It was sometime in the afternoon and we got off to make our way to a waiting team and wagon close by. My uncle helped Dad, Mother and me bring our bags and suitcases and load up into the wagon. There were a lot of mosquitoes. My uncle, who had come to get us said, "Oh, you'll get used to them after awhile.", and my oldest sister Yvonne said, "Yes, after you're dead!" Anyway we soon saw a house and that cheered my mother up a bit. It was the home and buildings of Mr. and Mrs. Leriger's grandparents and their home was a very well-built log house. We stopped there to get acquainted with a French Canadian family. My mother was sure pleased to meet them. We had a cup of tea and cakes, then left for the farm as we were told to call our place, a long 5 1/2 mile trip by wagon on a rough trail. Were we happy to get to our new home which was a big tent - big enough for the whole family; Mom, Dad and us 5 children. A lot of our furniture, beds, dressers and



The Prevost Family. Back Row: Edward D. (father). Second Row: Edward H. (son), Octavie, Yvonne, Edward C. (Grandfather), Camillia, Octave, Leo.

heater, etc., had arrived a week before us when my two uncles came up with the effects.

My other uncles and aunts were all settled, too, as they had arrived and pitched their tents a week before we arrived. Everybody ate at the cookhouse and diner, set out quite close to our ring of tents.

A big bonfire was made in celebration and one of my aunts, who was the chief cook (Tante Eugenie), made a bunch of cookies and big cake. We didn't have weiners or marshmallows to roast, so we would run to the bush (which was really close by) and bring sticks to throw at the fire. We all sang. We had no musical instruments yet except my mother's piano. It was still in a big crate wrapped up with canvass to protect the piano. Anyway we enjoyed watching the sparks rise up into the sky. It was dark and we didn't want to go to bed yet, but we were tired and finally succumbed to the sandman's call.

I was the oldest of the children and yet too young to help the men very much, but I had some chores to do. It was my job to pile firewood at the cookhouse and for the heater at our tent, when evenings were cool. I had to get water, etc., and later on when we got milk cows, it was my job to go and get them. They would wander a long way off to good pasture.

There were potholes here and there along the big creek, full of water. We were getting more cattle and horses and the holes were emptying. By fall all of the potholes were dry, so we had to haul water all the way from Fox Creek.

Living in tents during the summer is alright but with Autumn - then winter - coming on we had to think of warmer quarters. My father and his brothers, along with my grandfather who was the best axeman and sawyer of all, really got busy on the Birch Hills, 2 miles south of the Prevost land, and got out a lot of logs.

My father bought tracks and wheels, a big circular saw, and other mill parts at Spirit River and built a small portable sawmill. For power we used an 8-16 International one cylinder gas tractor.

Real good lumber was made and we were all kept busy, to cut enough to build 3 residences, with extra lumber to build other things.

We all wanted to build before winter set in. We all turned carpenters, even the women and children helped. Our house took a bit longer to build as it was quite a bit larger than the other two. However, we moved into it, I think 25 days before Christmas.

My uncle Joseph and my youngest uncle Athanase had gone back to Estevan before the building took place, but all of the others worked like beavers. A cattle shed was built and covered with hay that we had cut and stacked during the fall. Corrals were built. There was a lot of work, many chores and the hauling of water from Fox Creek (Egg Lake). This kept one man busy. We used a big sleigh and box and hauled water in 6 gas drums that had been cleaned out. It was a lot of work for after the stock was watered, the remaining drums containing water had to be rolled into the barn as you couldn't leave them outside to freeze solid. As long as the water was moving in transit it wouldn't freeze. We had to 'move' when working with the water chore.

My grandfather lived with us during the first part of the winter, then he and my uncles Alphonse and Eldege

went to a big lumber camp near Grande Prairie, while my father and we children took care of the stock that winter. My mother and I did the milking the following winter. While I went to college, my two brothers did the milking and the chores.

The name of the company was, 'The Prevost Frere and Cie.' but, unfortunately, when spring came around the company dissolved partnership. Each member held onto his homestead and bought what farm implements and cattle and horses they needed.

WATERING THE OXEN

Two dams had been built, one on my uncle Alphonse's homestead and one on my fathers. I recall a Swedish homesteader named Fred Lind who had no water at all on his place.

He lived about 1 1/2 miles west of the Prevost holdings, and used to come with his team hooked up to a stone boat loaded with two wooden barrels through a short-cut in the woods. Time after time, he'd water his oxen then fill his barrels and away he'd go. But, one day, he forgot to give his oxen drink and realized this after he got home. After filling his water pail in the house for his own use, he proceeded to water his oxen - lo and behold, they drank the whole lot! He then had to re-harness and strike out again for another load. We could hear him swear nearly all the way from his farm. He stopped swearing when my dad asked him what was the matter.

We had a lot of trees on our homestead and when I was home during the holidays, my granddad and I sure cut a lot for firewood. Then we would use our big buzz saw with our Mogul tractor. It was my dad's job to do the cutting, while I would clear the saw and my granddad and a hired man would haul the wood to the sawyer. Huge piles for firewood were made. Then of course moose being very plentiful, my father (who was an excellent hunter) kept us in moose meat. We always had a big garden and our deep cellar held more than enough vegetables for our need. In fact, we used to feed some to the stock. We had a lot of chickens and hogs, lots of milk, and one winter my father bought a cheese making outfit and made some cheese. I'm sure my brothers, Octave and Leo, will recall this for I wasn't home at the time. (When father was a young man back East he was a cheese maker by trade.)

Oh, another thing I remember, - our outdoor toilet was near the woodpile and everyone visiting it had to bring back an armful of wood (the men that is).

HIS BUSINESS

When it was time for my sisters Yvonne and Camille and myself to go to school in Edmonton (that was after a whole year away from school), my father would take us to the railway station at Wanham, where the rail company had set out a boxcar for a station or stopping place. They took off the big doors and installed a smaller one and put in a big pot-bellied heater. In the corner was a big box full of good coal. The section man would light it up on the days the train would come (we never knew at what hour but knew what day the train came). So a lot of times

we had to wait, and on one occasion besides my sisters and I there were about four others, all men. One was a minister and another Prest Bankhead, who a lot of old-timers will remember. There was a lot of conversation, whistling, and storytelling, and it so happened that Prest started telling one about the time he had gone hunting. He suddenly heard a crash and turning around saw this huge moose coming toward him. So big was he, his rack so large and spread out, that a team of horses and a hayrack could go in between the horns. The minister spoke up and said, "Hey there, my good man, how could a moose bearing a set of horns of that description go through the woods?" Prest Bankhead, said, "That was his own damn business and not mine!"

At Christmas time, our first time away from home, my father sent my sisters and me some money for our fare, and we were more than happy. Needless to say, Christmas time with your parents, brothers and sisters no matter where, is the happiest time in your life. We had the good fortune of having 14 days - both my sisters and I. My dad asked me how I would like to take the little portable sawmill that he had built, to an E. Rycroft who was farming one mile before reaching the town of Spirit River. Mr. Rycroft was also the Justice of the Peace for Spirit. My father had dismantled the mill, (for he had purchased a much bigger one) and had sold the small mill to Judge Rycroft, as he was called in those days, for 3 loads of good seed and feed oats. I would have to take the mill in 3 loads and bring back 3 loads of oats. Fine, no sooner said than done. Right away the next morning I started off and I'd go every other day. The weather wasn't too severe or my father would not have sent me, and I enjoyed it.

I also must mention that during our holiday we would go to parties and dances, and the family of Mr. Peter Tansem provided the music. It was good music, I will say. Dances were held at different homes. Peter played the violin, Mrs. Minnie Tansem the mandolin, and their son Arthur the drums, and often Louis Tansem, Pete's brother, joined in with his violin. I remember a dance held at Cameron's place, another one at my uncle Alphonse's place, one at our house (my mother played the piano along with them), and in later years dances were held at schoolhouses. I sometimes played the fiddle at these with Louis Tansem and Art. I had my violin and a guitar, later a banjo.

Time went on and so many things happened that to write them all down would use a book. There was the Spanish Influenza in the winter of 1918-19. We lost, I think, 11 boys at college - out of 120 boarders. I wasn't sick a single day during that year. The Fathers at the college took us out every day for long walks towards Calder, north Edmonton. We'd bring an ordinary trunk load of sandwiches and strong coffee; a 6 mile walk, but we were young and full of pep so we loved it. It was that much less time spent in studying.

THE LONG WALK

I will skip over a couple of years - this will bring us to the summer holidays of 1921. There had been a big

amount of snow that winter. Warm weather came of a sudden along with rain in the spring, causing landslides near and at Watino, thereby disrupting the railway travelling. The train would leave Edmonton, go as far as McLennan, and return. I did not want to wait so purchased my ticket to McLennan, stayed overnight at the Giroux Hotel and started off walking, after buying a loaf of bread for 10¢ and a couple cans of sardines for 5¢ each. After paying for my room and breakfast at the hotel, \$1.00 for the room and 60¢ for breakfast, I had only 25¢ left. I had a little cardboard suitcase. My trunk full of clothes I left at McLennan. I had a pair of thin-soled shoes and started off full of hope and full of cheer, for I was going home. I reached a farmer's place close by the railway somewhere a bit past Falher. I only stopped in Falher to buy a 5¢ chocolate bar with the nickel I had, then walked past Falher about 6 or 8 miles. I got to this farmer's place in time to help his daughter milk their 3 cows, then I was invited to supper. Boy, I was hungry, and I had a good bed that night in the spare room. They were very interested in what I had to tell them about the college I attended, for they had a boy coming of age for college. Early next morning after breakfast, I started off. Mr. Boulanger told me at breakfast time, "You have a long walk ahead of you, so don't bother helping with the chores. My wife has prepared for you a lunch, and good luck (bonne chance)."

I arrived at an extra gangs cookhouse, about a mile past Watino (I was told about that place by section men working on the track - moving the rails that had slid down, an awful mess and many derailed cars). Perhaps it was more than one mile, however, it was way out of town. Right away I spoke to the cook and told him my whole story. "Well boy," he said, "you are very welcome to stay and have supper in just a few minutes, then I've got a couple extra blankets you can use and sleep on the floor at the far end. There are two other chaps that will be sleeping there too." I slept well for I plugged my ears. My two companions were the world's best snorers. Anyway, I slept well and had a good breakfast of porridge. I'll always remember that, for the cook gave me a big man-size bowl and said, "Now, you eat all of that and it'll take you right up to Wanham!"

Walk, walk and walk. My shoes were so worn, hardly any soles left. I had to take them off often and plug in grass, then my feet hurt. I had to soak them in the ditch quite often. I was nearing Belloy and didn't dare stop for if I did, I'd have a hard time to get going again, for I was getting pretty tired. I guess I was walking too fast. Anyway, just outside of Belloy an extra gang had their boxcar (which was their home) on the side track, and they had stopped for supper. I got a good supper and coffee, and that was the first time that I had ever tasted Oleo margarine used instead of butter. I remember it was pure white but good when you were hungry. I got acquainted with the men, and one of them said he knew my dad. His name was Raoul Socquet. (A couple of years later this same Raoul Socquet helped us put up hay one fall.)

Well, encouraged by a good supper and good companionship, I struck out for Wanham knowing, too, that I had another 5 1/2 more miles to walk to reach home. About 1/2 mile of walking I could see a 3 wheeled go-car

coming towards me. The driver saw me at a distance and figured someone needed a ride. It was a Mr. Selby on his track inspection tour. He lived south and a bit east of Belloy. He gave me a few miles ride into Wanham. Boy, that helped, and there at the siding at Wanham sat two men, just passing the time of day. They had built a little smudge to drive away the mosquitoes, and I expect they were waiting for Mr. Selby, who was a good friend of theirs and, by this time, a real good friend of mine. The two men were Mr. Wilfred Cyr and Mr. Peter Tansem. Mr. Tansem said, "I guess you are anxious to get home, but you are welcome to stay at our place and you can strike out for home tomorrow." I thanked him and Mr. Selby, put a bit more grass in my shoes, and off I went.

I reached home, walked right into the house and plunked down into our big padded rocking chair. My mother removed my shoes and said, "Take a bath and go to bed," which I did. I rested and did a lot of sleeping for two full days and nights, then was my old self again and was soon helping around the farm and buildings.

As we had acquired quite a few head of cattle and horses, we would need a lot of hay for the winter and it was soon haying time. We were getting the hay machinery lined up and my dad said we would need help. He would hire an extra man. We already had a man by the name of Tommy Meigher, and lo and behold, my father met this Mr. Raoul Socquet at Belloy one day. Raoul came to work for us, not only during the haying time but way on into fall and part of the winter. I was glad to see him again.

I must mention here, before I forget, that 2 weeks after I was home my sisters arrived from Edmonton. The railroad was in operation again.

Mother was more than pleased to have her daughters back and they were great help to her. The three of them would often go out picking wild fruit. This they loved to do very much and we men, my father, my brothers and I, loved to eat the pies Mom made and also the jams.

We would go logging a lot, plowing, that is - breaking new land, clearing land, etc. I became quite an expert at driving a 5 or 6 horse outfit for plowing or breaking land and hauling logs to our mill from the Birch Hills, on the wide bunk sleighs.

I soon reached the age of 17 1/2 and thought I should do a bit of travelling and see the world. Not being very rich, my means of travelling right up to Edmonton was by freight cars (empty boxcars, not comfortable but free). I was told only once to get off, which I did that time, but as soon as the train started moving I got back on again, while the trainman wasn't looking.

I travelled up and down the Edmonton and British Columbia railroad quite a lot, worked at sawmills or farms at different points along the way to Edmonton, and finally ended at Falher, working for an uncle two months 'till the job petered out. Then I went working for a farmer at Donnelly the rest of the winter and on late into spring when he sold his farm, livestock and farm machinery. My wages during the winter was room and board plus 50¢ per day, and for the one month I worked in the spring, \$1.00 per day.

Then after the sale of his farm, my boss Mr. Angers, told me he would go to Regina, Saskatchewan. He had a

job waiting for him there - the position of male nurse at the General Hospital - and he invited me to come along with him. He said that I could live with him in Regina and that he was sure he could get me a job at the hospital.

We were soon on our way to Regina, Saskatchewan. I had only enough money to buy myself a new suit, some underclothes, etc, and a new suitcase. I traded my guitar for a better one. I was just about broke, so Mr. Angers loaned me the money for the trip by railway to Regina.

I didn't obtain work right away in Regina, so I attended school at the Regina Collegiate Institute, taking a business course. About two weeks later I obtained work at the hospital, which did not interfere with my schooling, as it was guard duty at night. I got my supper free and breakfast the following morning after my nights work, and my wages were \$4.00 per night, 7 nights per week.

I worked all winter there and the job petered out on April 1st. The term of schooling terminated April 15th. Mr. Angers kept on working and was trying to find me another job, for he knew the city well, having worked in Regina all through the first world war.

I remembered my uncle Alphonse Prevost had a big cattle ranch near Willow Bunch, Saskatchewan, exactly 100 miles south of Moose Jaw, so I wrote him and explained my circumstances. Within 5 days I received a letter saying, "Come, I have a job for you on my ranch."

I worked on my uncle's ranch for 6 years, that is to say 'till May, 1930, but had taken 10 months time off after my 3rd year on the ranch to go home to Wanham to see my folks, brothers and sisters for a little while. Then from there, straight to Montreal, spent a month with an aunt there, then to a northern town on the Transcontinental Railway east of Cochrane, Ontario, and again in Quebec a place called Taschereau, where I had an uncle and aunt on my mother's side, who owned a store and operated the post office. Their son, who was my cousin named Leo Gauthier, had the job of hauling the mail by toboggan from the station to the post office every day, twice a day. He kept the stoves going in the store during the winter, taking me around during his spare time.

I enjoyed the East, and while there worked in a big sawmill owned and operated by the Toban Lumber Co., until spring. Then I went to work for the Government, Dept. Public Works, on a 40 mile road building from Mackamic, Quebec, due south through a district named St. Rose de la Poularie, and on to a gold mining area with no name as yet but called, at the time, Area No. 4. I saw gold imbedded in quartz when we reached the area. Our work was to cut all the trees on a 40 foot wide strip, then other gangs followed behind completing the road work. We were the first to reach the gold field and some of the men went farming, and some transferred to other road work. As for myself, I decided to come back west. I came back to Saskatchewan to my uncle's ranch, then left there in the spring of 1930 and arrived in Wanham, May 2nd.

At that time, May 2, 1930, the Wanham Hotel was operated by Mr. Feligine Girard. My father and mother's home was directly across from the hotel. My uncle, Adolph St. Pierre, had a restaurant and bakery in the same building. The Wanham Community Hall was still

out on the S.W. corner of Mr. P. Tansem's quarter section, but there was talk of moving it into town. There was a barber shop and pool room - the barber at the time was Mr. Ed Fortier.



The Prevost Home.



Adolphus and Nora St. Pierre - 1933.

I did not remain idle, as there was a lot of work to be done in the new town. I helped my father and mother finish the upstairs in the home, also complete the lumberyard my father had started. It wasn't very big, but he sold lumber, paints, building paper, etc. He did this along with the Massey-Harris Agency and the newly acquired B.A. Oil Agency.

Life went on, with a lot of work which we all enjoyed. My brothers at the time were busy on the farm and also helped in town, from time to time.

In the very first days of June, my father had a terrible farm accident, breaking his leg in 3 places. He was rushed to the Holy Cross Hospital in McLennan. Our good nurse, Mrs. Cole, accompanied him to the hospital on the speeder, run by the section-foreman, Bill Ripley.

My father suffered quite a bit the first few days until his leg was properly set. Unfortunately, late in the night of July 5th, a clot of blood went to his heart and he passed away in a matter of a few seconds.

Mr. Ernie Trump, the station agent at the time, brought the telegram the next day. My mother saw him approaching the house and before he got to the porch, my mother exclaimed, "Your father is dead, my son." She asked me to read the telegram and the sad words explained it so.

So at home we had a lot of adjusting to do and the

funeral to take care of. My mother was standing up well, but I really did not know what worry or sorrow she was going through. I know for myself that I was doing plenty of worrying and staying awake at nights, for I could sense that a great weight was settling gradually on my shoulders. That was hard for a person who was accustomed to being quite free, going where he wanted to and when.

My mother, naturally wanted me to stay by her side and I also felt it my duty. She offered me the agencies my father operated. Both representatives of the Implement Co. and the Oil Co. came to see us a week later and I signed the papers, becoming agent and representative for both here in Wanham. Well, I had a lot of studying to do, but I received much help from the Company men and also from the Insurance Co. representatives, for I sold Insurance too.

My father had many friends all over the country; and for this reason, I was favored with many sales that I would not have had on my own. Thanks to Dad, this was my greatest help (along with my mother).

Then, in the fall of 1934, a year and a half after I built my little office and residence on a lot that my mother gave me (size of my office was 18 by 32) I got married to Yvonne Pronovost of North Kleskun.

A wedding dance was held at the home of the bride. Then after a few days in Wanham, a big wedding dance



Ed and Yvonne - 1933.

was held in the Wanham Hall, with the Tansem orchestra playing and also my mother playing the piano.

Our oldest child, a daughter Denise, was born in our little home. Doctor Johnson, who many Wanhamites will remember, was there. She was assisted by nurse Miss Pickup, a very good nurse and friend.

A second child was born, her name was Annette and she will be remembered by many of her old classmates in Wanham. Annette became a public health nurse a year after our oldest daughter became a nurse.

Then before our 3rd child was born, Harvey, it was decided we needed a larger home, so I bought a lot and 1/2 from my mother on the other street west and built a bigger home, a two story house. We enjoyed this house very much and we still talk about it, and even now still say that it was the best home we ever owned.

In the meantime, I had let go of the Massey-Harris business to Octave my brother, as the oil business and



*Back Row,
Left to Right:
Louis Hoeght
Joe Jasbec
Centre:
Onagh Harrington
Ed Prevost
Laurine Johnson
Front Row:
Adolph Fortier
Barbara Johnson*

insurance kept me plenty busy.

In 1946, when the Lassiter Land Clearing project was at it's height, a lot was going on in Wanham - business and many other activities, for a lot of people were involved with this project. The town of Wanham was put on the map!

I was also involved, in that I supplied the Lassiter Co. with all the oils, greases and gasoline for their trucks. All of their diesel fuel for their 14 caterpillar tractors and their stoves and heaters came direct to them by tank car from the B.A. Oil, and was stored in tanks along the railway track east of the Midland Elevator.

Soon our fourth child, a girl named Aline was born. She often talked about being a nurse, too, when she heard her sisters talking about the subject.

When the Lassiter Land Clearing Co. was finished its work up north of Wanham and north of Spirit River and was selling out its machinery, I let go of the oil business and became engaged in the seed buying business for the Steele Robertson Seed Co. I learned the business from Marcel Rault of Edmonton who came to the Wanham, Belloy, Codesa, Eaglesham and Tangent Districts for 3 falls in a row and I worked as his assistant. I was then on my own, until I sold out my business to a George Shea of Camrose, August 1, 1962.

On August the 6th, 1962, our daughter Aline, Yvonne, my wife and I left with our car loaded with all we could pack, saying goodbye to Octave and Aurore, (my brother and sister-in-law) and all our friends in town. We stopped at Cluny, Alberta, for a few days then away for B.C., a place called Duncan on Vancouver Island, where our oldest married daughter, Denise was living. We are still here in Duncan at this date February 10, 1979. Oh, I just happened to remember and I must tell my wife about it so as to give her a chance to buy me a birthday present. It's my birthday on February 18th - I'll be only 73 years young.

Before I terminate my story I must say that our dear

mother, Mrs. Octavie Prevost, well-known to many people in Wanham as Memere, passed away in September, 1958, and was buried in the Spirit River Catholic Cemetery. Our good friend and padre, Father Thomas and our Bishop Routier of McLennan, officiated at the funeral mass, with many friends attending.



The Ed Prevost Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Wayne McDonald (Annette's husband), Annette, Harvey holding daughter Chandy, Ed, Bill Brown (Denise's husband), Yvonne, Paddy Ann Brown, Aline Prevost, Denise Brown, and Thomas Brown. Front Row: Richard Prevost (Harvey's son), Bradley, Fran holding son Ryan, Nicole McDonald, and Annette's daughter Denise.



The Harvey Prevost Family. Bradley, Harvey holding Ryan, Fran and Richard. Front Row: Chany.

LEO - OCTAVE STORY

We were four and five years of age when we arrived here. We all lived in a large tent. Dad, Mother, Leo and I. My other sisters and brother stayed in school in Edmonton. Leo and I were 13 months apart. With no school

to go to we had lots of time to ourselves. Mischief was our great ambition. Early in March of 1917, one of the cows gave birth to a 55 pound calf. The barn not being warm the first winter, Dad would take the calves in the tent to sleep where it was warm. Soon the calf got to know where Leo and I were sleeping. By our bed Mother had put a chair to pile our clothes on, while in bed over night. One morning I got up to dress sitting on the chair. I found the calf had left his calling card there on our clothes. When my mother saw this, the calf couldn't run out of the tent fast enough. Soon we got old enough to help Mother with the chores of hauling in the wood, snow to melt, and feeding the chickens, etc.

In year 1919-20 Dad built, with the help of Edmonton School Division, a school in Belloy District. I believe school started there in 1920.

School was opened with 18 pupils and a Mr. Dan Dyer from the Fox Creek District as teacher. By this time I was 9 years old. Leo and I walked to school that first summer, which was 5 miles away. From then on, when there was no school in Belloy-Steele school, we would shift to Wanham South Slope school. The Belloy-Steele school got its name from the Steele stopping place, close by. I went to school in summertime mostly, 'till I reached the age 15. By that time I knew as much as the teacher, so I stopped school to help on the farm.

In the winters of 1923-24-25 I helped Dad trap. We were catching, mostly martin, fisher, fox, weasel and the odd wolf, many many flying squirrels although the fur had no value. One time I caught 2 camp robbers in the same trap, at the same time. In those days I thought, "This beats school all to heck." I shot my first moose when I was 13 years old. I was so excited I ran all the way home. Dad said, "Did you gut him?" I said, "No." Then it turned 50-60° below for 10 days. On the 11th day Dad says, "We've got to get this moose, as we're running low on meat." Dad was thinking the meat would be frozen solid. When we got there we found the meat spoiled inside. His thick hide had kept the body warm.

In the spring of 1924 Dad and I built 2 complete bee hives, and ordered each a 3 lb. package of bees and queen, from Eaton's at \$3.25 for each package. In the meantime we studied bee and honey rearing. Dad passed away in 1930. I continued keeping bees, getting more bees and hives every year. This continued 'till 1940, when I got allergic to their sting and had to dispose of them. In 1929 Leo and I started farming. We rented Dad's 6 quarters of land. There was 90 acres broke in all. Each year we were to break 15 acres of new land, which we did.

In 1933 Leo left me with the farm and went working out for wages.

After Leo left me, I hired my first helper, a Frenchman right from Quebec. He knew nothing but eat and sing, so I appointed him chief cook for a crew of two. This he was good at, so then I began to eat again, from moose meat and bannock to hot meals. That fall I just couldn't teach him to stook, so he rode the binder. I stooked. I guess he just was smarter than I. I paid him \$15.00 a month with Sunday's off.

In 1940 I rented the farm out with equipment, and bought a 6 month old truck. I took the gas and oil agency in Peoria and Heart Valley, and went out trucking

wherever I could, within 100 miles. The truck brought me good luck. I found a chick and married her.

1941-42 I went out logging with 2 neighbors. After seeding, we sawed 200,000 ft. of lumber, which we shared. That same summer I built the Massey-Harris building and a house in Wanham. I took the Massey-Harris agency and kept it for 17 years. In the winter of 1942-43, I bought a second truck and went trucking on the McKenzie Highway, during the winter only. My brother-in-law and I formed a company and sold by the ton. Coming home the next spring, we crossed the Smoky River with 1 foot of water above the ice. We had never prayed so hard in our lives. That same spring I bought the Munro farm which was 3 quarters, 2 miles south of Wanham town.



The Massey Harris shop - 1952.

In 1958 I sold out the Massey agency and went farming and carpentering, mostly houses. In 1971 I sold the farm to Langnes farms, then went to hobby woodwork.

Now that I am retired I still do woodwork, mostly lathe work, and I study tree and shrub pruning and grafting. I do love roses.

Leo is retired in Chilliwack. He has a lovely garden, many flowers and fruit trees. His hobby is woodwork also.

THE BISHOP CAME ON A CHOPPING BLOCK

It was the year 1923, and Dad had got us all out polishing the democrat. What for? The Bishop is coming for Confirmation in Wanham, to our house. Well, the democrat was ready, and Leo was chosen to meet the Bishop at the train, which was arriving at 3:00 p.m., July 3rd. Arriving there a few minutes early, Leo found himself a good parking place. He jumped off and stood there with his back to the democrat and team, to watch the train pull in. With the excitement and noise of the train, Leo didn't notice the scared team take off - leaving him there, watching the train. After the train left, Leo called over to the Bishop, "I'm here. Dad sent me to get you." The Bishop crossed the track and approached Leo. "What are you driving?" The democrat and team were gone! "Well, Father, I guess we'll have to walk." They arrived at the P. Tansem store 1/2 mile away. There was the team and democrat, minus the back seat. Someone

had caught the runaway team and tied them to the railing. So Leo ups and borrows the postmasters wood-chopping block for the Bishop to sit on, to come home the 6 miles - while Leo and his dog sat on the front cushion seat!

I often wondered afterwards what Dad said to Leo!



The Octave Prevost Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Judy Prevost, Donna Chaillier, Andy Chaillier, Deanne Prevost, Paul Prevost and Aurore Prevost. Second Row: Monique and Denise Chaillier. Seated: Octave Prevost holding Kristi-Lee and Rachell Prevost. Front Row: Nicolle Prevost.

OCTAVE PREVOST STORY CONTINUED *by Aurore Prevost*

The chick he married was me, Aurore Pronovost, from Sexsmith. We were married in the year 1940, October 11th. We lived in Heart Valley for a short time, as Octave had the B.A. Oil Agency. The following year we bought the John Harrington home on the hill, which is now owned by Stan Sawyer.

In 1945 Octave built a shop to open up the Massey-Harris Agency. We sold our home to Hermel Gerard in 1946 and moved into town, and have lived there ever since.

The home we bought in town was once owned by the Alberta Wheat Pool manager, Stewart Bennett.

In 1965 Octave sold his agency to Bob Wilde, as he found it too much work. His health wasn't too great. We turned to farming but never lived out there. We had bought the Munroe farms.

We raised 3 lovely children, 2 girls and 1 boy. Deanne became a teacher and is now in Abbotsford. Donna Mae married Andy Chaillier, has 3 girls and lives in Fairview. She too chose teaching as a career. Paul married Judy Hull, lives in Whitehorse, and works for the Yukon Electric. They have 2 girls.

In 1971 Octave sold his farm to the Langnes Farms.

Octave has been busy building and repairing different homes around town. You name it, there is hardly a building in Wanham that he hasn't pounded a nail in. He is very interested in woodcrafts as a hobby, and I make quilts as my hobby.

We love Wanham and all the people. They have been good to us. It looks like we will live here for awhile yet.

MEMORIES OF EUGENIE

Mrs. Alphonse Prevost

Although I spent only two years in the Peace River country - Wanham District - I was among the first to arrive, and I was impressed with this beautiful and healthful land with its clean air, its forests and flowers. The long, long summer days were delightful, but the very long and very cold winter nights were another story.

In the spring of 1916, the Prevost families all lived in Estevan, Saskatchewan. Edward, the eldest of five brothers, was fired with enthusiasm by stories of the Peace River country and inspired his father and brothers to take up homesteads there. That spring Edward, Eldege and Alphonse travelled by train as far north as Pouce Coupe. This was really a wilderness, absolutely no one and nothing there. They had to sleep on the ground and decided that it was just too far to take young wives and little children, so they came back to the siding at Wanham and there filed on six adjoining quarter sections, one for each: Edward, Sr.; Edward, Jr.; Eldege; Joseph; Alphonse and Bidou (Athanase). There was nothing at Wanham either, but there were a few settlers and I think the nearest town was Spirit River, about 20 miles away. To prove the homestead, we had to clear 10 acres yearly and live on the land at least six months each year.

Since Edward's wife had small children in school back in Estevan, and all the others were single, I was elected to be the cook for the bunch 'till the end of the school term. We all spent that first summer each in his own tent on his own quarter. Mine was fairly large and served as kitchen, dining room, bedroom, and occasionally as the church.

BED PARTNER

I recall one night grandfather went to bed in his own tent and thought it to be very cold, down by his feet. On investigation, he found a snake coiled up in his quilts.

After settling in, Eldege went back to Quebec; married and brought his bride out. Then, in the summer, Edward's wife arrived with her five little children and a young girl to help her. That girl was Lucienne Fortier who later married a Mr. Lerigier, a settler who was already living there with his parents. With the coming of these two young wives, it was not so lonely for me.

We had a three year old son who was always on the go. One day, while I was listening to all the brothers discussing something in the tent, we became aware that Noel had been missing for some time. I found him in a pool of water with just his hair and the tips of his fingers showing. Luckily I had arrived in the nick of time.

We had no horses and no mode of transportation but Eldege had a yoke of oxen and we worked with him. Edward had a team of horses and a democrat. Hordes of mosquitoes were the welcoming committee for every settler who got off the train. Sometimes the oxen's backs were so covered with these pesky critters that you couldn't put a fingertip on a bare spot of hide. Sometimes the oxen absolutely refused to move a step on account of them. We had to sleep under netting. The oxen were very slow-moving, but that very slowness once

saved Alphonse's life. He fell from the wagon tongue right in front of the wheels. Horses would surely have pulled the wagon right over him.

The men broke the land, seeded small acreages and planted little gardens. In the winter, they cut trees for lumber. The single men did a lot of hunting and trapping, and I baked a lot of bread for these young fellows to take on their trips in the bush. Once Edward shot a bear and we tried that meat but surely didn't like it!

We had plenty to eat - cows had been shipped in from Edmonton, so we had our own milk, cream and butter. We had small gardens and root cellars to keep our vegetables. If you didn't keep a close watch and if your dog was too friendly, the single men often raided your garden or root cellar. We had hams and bacon shipped from Edmonton and most delicious salt pork came in little barrels. In the summer we picked great quantities of huge wild strawberries and blueberries.

Our social life was just about nil. There were no schools, no church, no town. We visited a little, just among the families, and I remember a Mr. and Mrs. Bolduc and family, who lived not too far away.

The men got our houses built that fall, and I recall that mine was the last one finished. They were built of logs - just one room with a cottage roof. I think the inside walls were covered with heavy paper or cardboard. That house is still standing, moved into town and is now the home of Ray Waters.



The Prevost Family. Standing, Left to Right: Leo, Ozan, Gay, Cecile, Octave. Seated: Mrs. Eugenie Prevost, (an aunt - 87 years of age), Sister Edward (Yvonne).

LORD HELP THE PIGS

We had a travelling priest who held no regular services, but said mass in our homes whenever he could be there. One time, while I was still living in the tent, Alphonse had walked into Spirit River so I had to go milk the cow. I was out quite awhile and during that time Edward's pigs paid me a visit. They rooted into everything and made a horrible mess of my "house". While I was cleaning it up, Edward sent one of the children to ask me to come to the house, to say prayers with them. I sure didn't feel like saying prayers - felt more like butchering a pig!

In August of 1917, I had another son. In September

Edward's wife had a daughter so sometime late in October or November we took our babies to Spirit River to be baptized. When Octavie was all dressed up complete with hat and gloves, she went to pick up her baby. The baby looked at her and started to cry and we thought, what a primitive country! Your child sees you so seldom with a hat on, that she doesn't know you. We travelled with Edward's horses and democrat, and it must have been a very late fall because I remember the masses of flowers the priest had around the church.

Brother Joseph didn't stay very long at Wanham, and when he told Alphonse of a good buy on a ranch in southern Saskatchewan, we decided that we too preferred the prairies and so, in the spring of 1918, we left the Wanham District. My memories of my time there are both good ones and bad ones - as they would be of any place. Now, sixty years later, I was very pleased to be able to attend the homecoming (1978).

CECILE PREVOST (REILLY)

I was born in Wanham on September 24, 1917, and started school in Belloy (Steele School). I went from the farm six miles in a democrat with two older brothers and an older sister, on Monday mornings. We stayed in a small one room house just across from the school for the week, then drove back home on Fridays. I moved to Wanham town the following year and walked one mile to the South Slope school. Later on I went to boarding school in Grouard and Peace River. High school was taken at St. Joseph's Academy in Grande Prairie and commercial school in Camrose.

I worked as secretary at Housez's Portrait Studios in Edmonton.

In 1943, I married John Patrick Reilly of Cluny, Alberta. We both worked in Edmonton two more years, John with the UGG and I at Housez's.

We moved to Cluny in 1945, where John took over the UGG elevator, and I clerked in the local store. Later I took over the mail route and supervised at both the Town School and Reserve School.

We raised a daughter, Pat, a registered nurse now, married to Corp. Don Pittendreigh, and a son, Tim, who worked with oil companies and is now (1978) back in university taking business administration.

We retired to Salmon Arm, B.C., in 1977, after 31 years in Cluny, Alberta.

YVONNE PREVOST AND CAMILLIA PREVOST

We arrived in Wanham with our parents and three brothers in August of 1916. Wanham had no schools so we went to Morinville Convent as boarders, for one year. The following two years were spent as boarders at the F.C.J.'s Convent, in Edmonton.

After schools were built in Wanham, we attended there for a while.

In the year 1925, under the request of His Excellency

Bishop Grouard, we went to the Catholic Mission in Grouard, Alberta.

After the summer holidays of 1926, I, Yvonne Prevost left Wanham in October to enter the Religious Community of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal. After two years of study, I pronounced my Vows and became Sister Edward of the Sacred-Heart, F.C.S.P.

As a teacher I taught in several missions: Peace River, Midnapore, New Westminster, B.C.; Dawson Creek, B.C.; and the Yukon (Whitehorse). During the summer months, I taught Religion also in places where Catholic pupils did not have the opportunity to have Religion in schools, one of my very favorite places being Wanham.

As for my sister Camillia, she entered the Religious life two years after I and became Sister Octavie-Cecillia. She too, was a teacher and her first mission was in the Sturgeon Lake School for one year. She was then sent to Wabaska, as they needed a teacher for grades 9 and 10. During the first winter she contracted a very severe cold, and with a heart case of an enlarged heart, this brought on her death at the age of 25. She died July 24th, 1936, in our Infirmary at Midnapore, Alberta, where she had been transferred by plane from Wabaska, Alberta.

As for myself, after forty-one years of teaching, I fell and injured my right hip. For seven years I kept getting worse, so stopped teaching and took a one year leave. I studied to become an Activity Directrice in the field of Arts and Crafts in Occupational Therapy in Seattle, Washington.

After receiving my diploma, I worked with the seniors and handicapped for fourteen years. In 1975 my hip required an operation, and in 1976 a complete hip

replacement. My recovery was like a miracle, and I am back at teaching Arts and Crafts.

DORSE PROSSER

We arrived in Peoria March 17, 1927. Dad and Mom lived to be 87 years old. They are interned in Silver Creek, B.C. Ivan and Geneva are in good health and live in Rutland, B.C. Carrie and I live near Fort St. John. Frances (Mrs. Leigh) lives in Red Deer, Alberta. Rose is in Vancouver; Bertha - Salmon Arm, and Hazel in Vancouver.



The Prosser Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Rose, Ivan, Dorse, Roy. Front Row: Mrs. Prosser holding Hazel, Frances, Geneva, Mr. W. Prosser holding Bertha.



Prevost Family at Wanham Homecoming - July 1, 1979. Back Row, Left to Right: Octave, Sr. Edward, Ed, Leo. Front Row: Cecile, Gay and Ozan.



Aureore Prevost

We had three children in Peoria. Ernest has horses on a small ranch, just southwest of Calgary. Gladys is the manager of the big Woolco store in Vancouver. Trella lives here beside us. She is the Lab Technician in the Fort St. John Hospital. Karl, her husband, works as maintenance man for the school board and sells jade as a hobby.

We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in Fort St. John in December, 1979. Our children went to a lot of work to make this an enjoyable occasion.

We have 7 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

In 1926, I was the Class A World Champion gold panner. I do some panning each summer.

BIRTH OF A DOCTOR

One of the outstanding experiences that I can remember was in the late 30's, probably 1937. Our teacher was a Mr. Tetz. His wife was pregnant during the summer. In late fall the doctor pronounced it a caesarian case and warned her to be sure to come early to the hospital. In January we had a blizzard that lasted for days. In the middle of that storm Mrs. Tetz's time came. There was no way we could get her out of Peoria. The church prayed. My wife was looking after her and delivered a bouncing boy with no complications. Today that baby is a medical doctor.

Another time, the wife and I and our little baby were visiting in winter. During the afternoon a bad storm came up. It was dark when we left for home with team and caboose. The snow was so deep that the horses started crowding and broke the tongue of the caboose. That made things very serious. I wrapped Carrie and the baby with what blankets we had and left them in the caboose out of the wind, while I lit out in the dark, for where I figured the nearest house was. I ran into John Wendland's woodpile. If I had been a few feet more to the right I would have missed his place and no doubt got lost in his field in the blizzard. We would all have perished before morning. As it was, I found the house where I woke John up, and with a light we got Carrie and the baby into the house for the night. I got on one horse and turned them loose and they found their way home through the storm. That was just a part of life in those days.



Roy Prosser and Alf Tracy - 1936.

IVAN PROSSER

Mr. Ivan Prosser came to Peoria in 1926. On April 17, 1927 the whole family arrived. They slept on the floor in Pete Tansem's store overnight.

Dorse Prosser was the first young person married in Peoria. He brought his wife home on December 18, 1929.

The first Peoria school was built by volunteer help in 1928. Miss Head (Marion Nichol), from Grande Prairie was the first teacher.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church was organized in the fall of 1928, with twenty-three members.

The Harold Reiswig store started in 1931, in a granary. George Reiswig and brothers operated a sawmill three miles south of Wanham, in the winter of 1929.

PUTIO

by Lorraine Putio

Wasył (William) Putio was born on January 20, 1900 in Jaroslaw, Poland, to Joannes and Maria Putio, farmers who lived near the river San. At the age of 14, he and his second eldest brother were left to do the farming, when the eldest brother was drafted into the Polish army and never heard of again. His father was killed by the

Russian army. Wasył's mother remarried but became a widow again in a short time, when her husband was accused of being a spy and was hung by the Austrian army. In 1918 when Wasył was 18 years old, his mother became ill and died, and he was drafted into the Polish army. After the war was over, he spent 8 years travelling from Poland to Italy and Germany, working at various jobs. In early 1927, with the threat of communism upon the country, Wasył made plans to leave for Canada, where the immigration department had created the possibility of accepting Europeans with some knowledge of farming. These people were to be sent to western Canada to take up homesteads, thus helping to develop the country. He arrived on the ship 'The Empress of Scotland' on May 23, 1927, landing in Quebec. By train the immigrants, most of them with little knowledge of the English language, made their way westward. Wasył's first stop was on a farm in Saskatchewan, where he worked until after the crop was harvested. With a few dollars pinned inside his shirt for safekeeping, he moved on to Edmonton, Alberta. The city was in the process of installing their water and sewer system, so Wasył hired on with the crew and spent the next two years working to make enough money to go homesteading.

In the fall of 1929, he arrived in the Peace River country and filed on a quarter of land 2 miles west and 1/2 mile north of the hamlet of Wanham. Walter Stepaniuk, a neighboring farmer had an unused shack which Wasył lived in until he had his own cabin built.

WILD COW

When he wasn't working on the cabin he was stooking for neighbors, and by spring had enough money to buy a cow - a wild one, he discovered, because she was next to impossible to milk. She then was run over and killed by the train a month after he got her. To buy another cow he grubbed 5 acres of land for a neighbor. In the spring of 1930, he hired Jake Triebwasser with an old Hart Parr tractor, to break the first 15 acres of land to be cleared on the homestead. To pay the \$4.00 per acre for breaking, Wasył (now called William, or more often Bill, since this is the English interpretation) made a few dollars by working for other farmers at the going rate of \$2.00 per day. He once grubbed for 3 days, in return for a 100 pound sack of flour, and hauled away a large pile of manure (which also took 3 days) in return for 2 small pigs. During the winter, Bill had agreed to help build a cabin for a neighbor in exchange for a horse and colt. He fed the animals for the remainder of the winter. Then the neighbor decided to give up his homestead and leave the country, so gave Bill the colt in payment for feeding both horses. Needless to say the cabin was never completed and Bill later bought the mare for \$30.00. Along with his grub hoe and a walking plow, the horse became his third piece of 'machinery' with which to begin farming.

He rented the Henderson land for many years, (later owned by Leal Fowler and then Weller Connell), farming with horses until 1943 when he purchased a new AR John Deere tractor on steel wheels for \$1,300.00. Such a panic there was in learning to operate the 'steel horse', and several times it nearly got away on him! During the

depression years, when number 1 Garnet wheat was selling for 18¢ a bushel, Bill was lucky enough to have a 60 bushel per acre crop one year and there was a 120 bushel per acre oats crop. The oats were worth only 8¢ per bushel, but the yield was high enough so he made a few dollars even at that.

On November 22, 1930, Bill married Kataryna Pisarchuk (later called Katie by many who knew her well), daughter of Nickolas and Anastasia Pisarchuk, who were homesteading east of Wanham. In the same ceremony, Katie's sister Anne, was married to William Manzulenکو and today Bill and Anne still reside on his original homestead just east of Wanham. By 1935, Bill and Katie Putio had a family of 3 children - Mary, born in October of 1931; John, born in April, 1933; and Taras, born in February, 1935. Times were tough, but Katie worked alongside Bill in the fields and helped with the cattle and hogs, as well as growing a huge garden for their own use. In spite of all the work that seemed endless, Katie was known for her willingness to lend a hand to someone in need, and to provide hearty meals to all who came calling - even the transients, who travelled the railroad tracks which passed near the house, were fed and watered before they went on their way.

During the war years the farm was a good place to be, especially if one had cattle and hogs to sell - a cow would bring about \$300.00, and hogs between \$40.00 and \$50.00 per head. A second quarter of land was purchased, this one from Eli Barrett, who lived a mile east of Wanham. When Bill made the trip to Spirit River to complete the transaction he walked over the muddy, rutted, dirt road (Highway 49) for the 18 miles, then decided it would be easier walking home on the railroad. By the time he arrived at the railroad bridge over the Burnt River it was dark, and he had to crawl on hands and knees across the bridge in order to keep his feet from slipping between the ties.

BY FIRE OR TRAIN

In the late 1940's fires were going through the timber north of the Burnt River. Just as the threshing crew had finished a field of oats on the home place, a flying spark made its way over to the south bank starting a blaze which came dangerously close to the house. As it was, the fresh straw pile, the barn and one calf were lost in the fire; the fence enclosing the pigs burned. The pigs escaped the fire, but as they were scrambling for safety across the railroad track, a passing train killed 5.

All was not without reward, however, and 1946 was the year the Putios bought their first vehicle, a brand new half-ton pickup. In 1953 another quarter of land was purchased, this one from Fred Murphy who farmed along Highway 49, two miles west of Wanham. By this time Mary had left home and married Alex Kozuback, moving to his farm in the Ksituan area; John had joined the army and was posted in Korea; Taras remained to help on the farm.

On November 9, 1954, tragedy struck and Katie passed away suddenly. When John returned from the army with his wife and child, Taras went out to work for the next three years. Mary and Alex were now operating the

U.F.A. bulk station in Wanham, had one child and had purchased the quarter section formerly owned by Marius Olsen.

In the spring of 1957, Bill married the former Helen Didow of Rycroft and moved to Rycroft, where he lived until 1961. After purchasing the quarter of land from Mary and Alex he returned to Wanham to live in his little house by the nuisance grounds. Here he remained until his death on December 31, 1977, at the age of 77 years. Taras had returned to the farm in 1958 with his wife, the former Lorraine Olsen (granddaughter to Marius), and they set up housekeeping in the newly renovated house on the Murphy quarter. He and his dad farmed together until 1970, when Bill retired. By this time Taras had purchased a half-section of land from Jim Rutledge, and had leased another quarter. In 1965, Taras moved his family - Terry, born December 12, 1958; Kevin, born August 22, 1961; and Leanne, born December 25, 1962 - to the Rutledge place, which is the family home at the time of writing. Mary and Alex had 2 children and are presently residing in Bentley, Alberta; John and Violet had 7 children and live in Ft. St. John, B.C. The original Putio cabin, built in 1930 still stands on the homestead, a reminder of those pioneers who helped to settle the Peace.

MRS. LEITA RAMBO

by Lillian Rambo

In the summer of 1949, Mrs. Leita Rambo and her two girls, Lillian and Mary moved from Consort on the Alberta prairies to the mighty Peace River country, residing at Peoria. Lillian, (known as Bambi) had just



Left to Right: Mary, Helen, Mrs. Rambo, Elsie and Lillian.

graduated from twelfth grade from the Academy at Canadian Union College Heights - near Lacombe, a Seventh Day Adventist owned and operated school, with grades ten to College. Mary was in fourth grade at the Consort Consolidated school at Consort, Alberta.

They moved into an upstairs apartment in Helen and Harvey Comm's house, north of Peoria Church. Helen was Mrs. Rambo's oldest daughter.

During her stay in Peoria, Mrs. Rambo enjoyed helping with church and school activities, and was talented in using her hands in making flowers,

decorations, costumes, etc. She also enjoyed poetry, and wrote for her own enjoyment - a talent she passed on to her daughter, Lillian. Lillian enjoys writing her annual Christmas letter in poetry form for over 150 friends, who receive a mimeo copy each year.

In the summer of 1950, after taking correspondence for a year, Lillian went to Red Deer and took French 3 and Algebra 2 at S.S. That fall she enrolled in the University of Alberta in Calgary, to receive her teacher training in elementary education. The next year, 1951, found her beginning her teaching career in a little country church-operated school at Erskine, Alberta, where she taught grades three to nine, with eight students. One of those students, Sheila Gueffroy ended up teaching the Seventh Day Adventist church-operated school at Peoria, in Lillian's home area, several years later.

Mrs. Rambo and Mary came to Erskine to live with Lillian during that first school year. The next year, 1952, they returned to the Peoria area, and Lillian took summer school courses in Edmonton. That fall, she returned to Peoria where she would teach the East Peoria School, following Esther Robertson, who had supervised correspondence school there the year before. Lillian had grades two to eight, her students being: Diane Wendland - grade 2, Arnold Gliege - grade 3, Joseph Bjerkseth - grade 3, Mary Bjerkseth - grade 3 or 4, Elsie Gliege - grade 3 or 4, Lloyd Amundson - grade 4, Richard Dick - grade 4, Garry Wendland - grade 5, Frances Wendland - grade 6, Frances Amundson - grade 7, and Esther Gliege - grade 8.

Highlights of that school year were their Christmas fund raiser - a pie social, and their Christmas program, one of the items being "A Wedding at Wayback." Because of a lack of bigger boys, Betty Wendland was the groom, while Esther Gliege was the minister. With the money brought in from the pie social, the children enjoyed hot soup for the remainder of the school year, after taking out expenses for their Christmas program.

On the closing day of school, Rodney Rude took teacher and students to the Smoky to celebrate. Another item of interest that school year was that each child was given a window to paint. Branches of apple blossoms over each window brightened up our days after that.

LOVE THAT SCHOOL

Because of a special "Good breakfast" contest going on during the winter, the three Gliege children came to school one fifty-below-zero blizzard day, when the snow was up to the horses' stomachs as they pulled their caboose full of precious cargo to the school. That day we had school with only three students. What determination to win a contest! Or could it have been a "love" for school?

The following summer Lillian again spent at summer school in Edmonton, and that fall found her answering a call to teach in a little church-operated school again - this time in Brewster, Washington, U.S.A. This time she had grades one to eight. She never did return to Canada to live.

In 1956, she married an American, Don Wysong, and settled down in Pendleton, Oregon.

In the meantime, her sister, Elsie, and her husband Chris Weis, bought property in the Peoria District and moved there from Lacombe. Their son, Dallas, was born in Sexsmith during the year that Mrs. Rambo, Lillian and Mary were living at Erskine.

Now Mrs. Rambo and all four daughters had claimed Peoria area as home, while a son, Harry Rambo lived for several years in the Sexsmith area, later moving to Dawson Creek.

Mrs. Rambo moved to the Alfred Reiswig house, across from Harold Reiswig's store in Peoria. She and Mary cooked for the W.J. Rottacker's crew in the bush, near Hythe during the winter months. She also enjoyed helping Harold and Ruby Reiswig in their store.

The winter of 1949, Lillian helped Eve Krenzler in the Peoria post-office for a short time.

In January of 1961, Leita Rambo became ill and was flown from Grande Prairie Hospital to the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton, where she passed away from illeitis. Her body was laid to rest in the Peoria Cemetery on February 7, 1961, just a few hours after her grand-daughter, Sheryne Rude, was born to Mary and Rodney Rude in the Spirit River Hospital.

By then the family had separated, going in many directions. Mary and Rodney lived at Lethbridge, Alberta. Elsie and Chris Weis were in Faunton, Massachusetts, Lillian and Don Wysong live in Pendleton, Oregon with their three children, Richard Wayne, Sherilyn Dawn, Cindy Lou, and Patti Jo. Harry and Gladys Rambo were at Dawson Creek, while Helen and Harvey Comm remained at Peoria. An older son, Herbert lived at Redcliff, Alberta.



Snow fun - 1949-50. Left to Right: Raymond Wegh, Dolly Rheil, Mary Rambo, Trella Prosser, Ernest Prosser, Lillian Rambo and Harvey Comm.

In recent years Elsie and Chris have settled in College Place, Washington, Lillian and Don at Battle Ground, Washington, Harry and Gladys at Armstrong, B.C. and Helen and Harvey Comm have moved to Kelowna, B.C., but still farm some land at Peoria. Their son Garth farms in the Peoria and Belloy area. Another son Grant and wife, Sylvia (Madarash) live at Fort St. John, where Grant is an auctioneer.

Coming back to the Peoria and Wanham homecoming in 1978 was a great thrill for Lillian, accompanied by her daughter, Sherilyn, and also Chris Weis, a brother-in-law, and his sister, Leona Weis. Their sister, Ophelia Weis Brooks who still lives in Peoria, ran the post-office

with her husband, Jake. Their son, Marvin also farms in the Peoria area. Lillian met several of her former East Peoria students of twenty-five years ago - Richard Dick, Frances (Wendland) Littman, Frances (Amundson) Boudreault, Betty (Wendland) (Blois) Vig, and Arnold Gliege. What a joy it was to meet her students again after all those years, and also her old Peace River friends. That Wanham area homecoming will stay with her as a highlight for years to come.

ANDREW RAMSFIELD and Sons, Arthur, Sam and Arnold

Andrew Ramsfield and his eight year old son, Arne, arrived in Wanham from North Dakota, U.S.A., in the fall of 1918. He had heard of the opportunities in the Peace River Country from his friend, Peter Tansem, who had come to Wanham the previous year. Andrew immediately went to work for the Northern Alberta Railway, at Manor, a few miles west of the town. He later became section foreman.

In 1919, he sent for his two older sons, Arthur, who was thirteen years old, and Sam, who was eleven years old. Their mother had died four years earlier.

For a few years, Andrew and sons lived at Manir and at the Smoky River while he was employed by the railway. Then they moved to Wanham, to live in the log house on the Leriger farm. Andrew helped to build the first Wanham School, which the boys attended.

About 1926, Andrew remarried and his wife was an English nurse, who was the Wanham District nurse at that time. She was Florence Tefor, and had nursed in India for a number of years, also in London, England. After their marriage, they opened a store in Belloy, but not long after this, the store was destroyed by fire. Andrew, his wife and Arne moved to Dimsdale where they had another store. Andrew later worked for the elevator company in Dimsdale. Their daughter, Margaret was born there, also another son, who died not long after birth. In 1934, Andrew, his wife and daughter moved to Victoria, B.C.

Meanwhile, Arne had returned to Wanham, where Art and Sam were still living. Art had filed on a homestead a half a mile south of Wanham, built a house, and the boys along with their father had lived there before Andrew's remarriage. This farm was later sold to the Sathers.

Art worked on the railway at the age of sixteen, and in tie camps; later learned the carpentry trade under Dave Bolduc Sr. of Belloy. He worked summers repairing elevators, and building houses for grain companies in various parts of Alberta, returning to Wanham in the winter.

Art had excellent wells on his farm, and since there was no good water in Wanham, Art built a water tank and began to supply the town with water. Wanham's first waterman! He also hauled freight for the railway, and built houses and a restaurant. He helped build the second school in Wanham. Art was treasurer of the South Slope School board for a number of years. In 1935, he married Jean Cameron and their first son, Donald was born in Grande Prairie in 1938. They remained in Wanham until

1940, when they moved to Victoria. A daughter, Heather, and a son, Douglas were born there.

Sam and Arne lived in Wanham until 1934, when they left with their father for Victoria. Sam returned for a short time and worked on the South Slope School. In 1938, he went to Blackfalds, where he married Mary MacAllister. They have one son, Jim.

Arne married Montheleene Cameron in Victoria. They have a daughter, Wendy, and a son, Richard.

JEAN RAMSFIELD

When Fred Nelson accidentally drowned while swimming in the dam, the whole community at Wanham felt it deeply. He was young and very well liked. Art built the coffin, quite possibly with Delbert Wells and a carpenter from Spirit River. Art doesn't know how the latter happened to be there but he helped them, and the 3rd person may have been Delbert Wells. The handles were bought, the coffin was calcimined grey, lined, and we seem to recall that the Frontier Lumber Co. donated the lumber. Fred had no family and the police wanted to just bury the body. All who heard of it were shocked and indignant, to say the least. Anyway, the people of Wanham saw to it that Fred Nelson received a decent burial.



Art, Jean and baby.

Art's father, Andrew Ramsfield, and brother Arnold, came to the Peace River country in 1918. They had been friends of the Tansems in North Dakota where Andrew's wife, Thea, died when Art was nine years old, Sam seven years, and Arnold five years. Andrew Ramsfield worked on the railroad (Edmonton-Dunvegan and British Columbia) and became section foreman at Manir. He later sent for Art and Sam (Selmer), who had remained behind with relatives and friends. Art and Sam arrived in Wanham on July 1st, 1919, the first sports day for Wanham. Actually, they went on to Manir first and were accompanied by an uncle and a couple of friends. When the train stopped at Wanham (there was nothing there at the tracks except a log loading platform), no one they knew was there to meet them. They stayed on the train as their tickets were through to Spirit River. When the train arrived at Manir, Andrew Ramsfield was there to collect the pay cheques for the section men, and the boys saw him - and so they got off at Manir. They lived with their father there until that fall of 1919, when Andrew went to



Art and Jean.

the Smoky. The winter was spent there and evidently it was quite an adventure for them. They fished and trapped - and saw fur buyers come to the little settlement. Apparently these buyers carried large amounts of money to pay off the trappers. Quite a number of Italians lived there also, and there seems to have been a fair amount of activity. Art, Sam and Arne went frequently to Wanham and the trainmen often stopped the train and they rode the engine to their destination - either Wanham or the Smoky. Art recalls that he never heard it called Watino, at that time. It was always the Smoky. In the spring the Ramsfields returned to Manor, where their dad was still employed on the railroad. About a year later they moved into Wanham, where they lived in the Leriger house - the log one, 'till 1925. Art took up his homestead that year and they built the first house on the hill, on the site where Sathers live. Andrew married the district nurse and moved to Belloy, where he had a homestead near the Selbey place. Later he built a store at Belloy. This store burned down, and he and his wife moved up to Dimsdale.

Andrew Ramsfield helped build the South Slope School at Wanham (1918 Art believes), along with the Tansems and others. (Hans Mortenson could likely have recalled this to mind). Anyway, all three Ramsfield boys and the Tansems, Murphys, etc. were among the first pupils. (Jim and Kathleen will remember this no doubt). Art says Mrs. Duncan Cameron was the first teacher and Ross Archibald taught later.

Jack Murray came into Wanham about 1919. He used to tell some amusing stories of the early days. Among them one about Hans. Hans, in recalling the early years, said that when he arrived in Wanham in 1914 (about then) there were only three people there - himself, Cornelius Olson and Smith's cattle.

Art says Jack Grey and Oscar Oakleaf took up homesteads together. Jack Grey cooked for the men and Mr. Ramsfield up at Manor, and he and his family later moved to Winnipeg, where he ran a hotel. Oscar Oakleaf looked after Grey's farm.

Art was secretary treasurer of the South Slope School District. We were married in 1935, and he began a few years before then - 2 or 3 years - and continued until we left in September, 1940.

APRIL FOOL

Mrs. Cole, a nurse, tells a story about Oscar Oakleaf. He arrived early on April first on his horse, limped on his

short leg to Mrs. Cole's door with his hand all bound up in a pillow case. He moaned and groaned and Mrs. Cole kept asking, "Whatever happened, Oscar?" She got him into the dispensary, and as she finally got the bandages off she saw he held a handful of eggs. When he exclaimed, "April Fool!", she could have killed him. At the time, she failed to see any humor.

Mrs. Cole had lots of interesting stories of the people she met and cared for. In the years she worked in Wanham she had some very rough travelling. I remember the first time I ever saw her, she was at our place. Mother looked out the kitchen window and saw her walking from the south. She went out and brought her in for tea and a rest. She had walked all the way from Andrew Stones corner - about 8 miles through that winding narrow bush road, after being out on a night call. Quite a gal!

Talking about night calls, when Art and I lived on the hill we were wakened more than once by people knocking on the door, asking for the nurse. We lived so close they either thought it was the nurse's house or that we would know where she was.



Left to Right: Sam Ransfield and Halvor Sveinunggaard.

\$60 PER YEAR

Also once or twice, Art got up to let in people who wanted to pay their taxes - after twelve o'clock on their way home from the beer parlor! I still don't know how they happened to have any ready cash after being there all night. So we had a few laughs, in spite of the inconveniences. In those days school taxes were paid to the secretary-treasurer of the school board and then forwarded to Edmonton. Art got paid \$60.00 per year, which included meetings and the above services. Figured by the hour, it would work out to pretty low wages wouldn't it?

ALBERT REDLON

submitted by Jeanne McCallum

My first husband, Albert Redlon, myself, and our four children, all boys ranging in age from five years to five

months, arrived in Wanham in the year 1952. Albert was a returned soldier, and five years after his discharge from the army, he obtained a lease, land location being - E 1/2 25-78-3-W6.

For five years we had roamed through Alberta, and after this restless life, I was glad that it looked like we were going to get settled somewhere.

We came from Bellevue, where it looked like spring, and arrived in Wanham in the beginning of April, where it was still winter. When we came to the lease, there was a granary Albert had built the year before, and there was a pile of lumber to build a house later on. The cabin was sided with tar paper, and was quite chilly after standing empty for so long. There was a wood and coal stove in it. We adults could take it, along with the three older boys, but the youngest boy, Gordon, was not too strong, and had a cold when we came. During the first days after our arrival in Wanham, Mrs. Wade, one of our closest neighbors noticed that the baby had a bad cold, and offered to keep him in her warm place so he could get over it. This was a help, until she, too noticed that his cold got worse. We took him to Dr. McCrum in Sexsmith, who advised us to rush him to the hospital in Grande Prairie, as he had pneumonia. We were all glad after a time to hear that Gordon was well again, and we could get him from the hospital and take him home. Ever since, we were grateful to Dr. McCrum and the staff of Grande Prairie Hospital. My oldest son, Albert, was five years old then. Following him was David, four, then Lloyd, two and a half years old. I came to Canada as a war bride from Amsterdam, Holland in the year 1946.

The first year at Wanham was tough going for me, as well as for Albert. There was much work to do. We had the spring work and started building on the house. Albert bought a barn and pulled it to the place with a tractor. He bought a team of horses, some chickens and eleven pigs. Everything was new for me, and in the beginning I was not much help, as I was inexperienced. We got some cattle on shares and I learned the milking of four cows. We had one cow from the V.L.A. We got much help from the V.L.A. and D.V.A.

The first year we had a nice crop of oats, but too little to pay the crop share of 25%. The fall of the second year, it looked as if we were getting ahead. We had fourteen head of cattle, a dozen chickens all laying, and out of the eleven pigs we got about forty-six pigs. Many were ready for market. They were shipped, but right after we got the money for them, here were all the bills to be paid.

The year after that one though, our luck seemed to turn completely. It was a very dry year and the wheat in the field was about half a foot tall and scorched. That fall and winter, Albert had to go out to work.

In the meantime, Albert, my oldest son was ready to start school, but there was no school bus. There were not enough school age kids on that line, so we sent him for awhile to Rycroft Roman Catholic School by train every week. Soon there was a meeting, and there it was decided that Marion and Robert Wade would take the kids to and from school by car. This was nice for the kids. My two oldest ones were about the same age as the two oldest Wade boys, Gordon and Roy. They did get along well and liked to go to Wade's after school, to play until

supper time. Later on the school bus came and the driver was Stan Sawers. He helped, fixing the front door when it was very cold and the kids had bad colds. He brought aspirin and Vicks from the nurse for the ones who were sick.

The start at the land wasn't easy. It was cleared and broken, but then we had to buy tractors and other machinery. However, Albert worked hard, and I tried my best. However I was too inexperienced with farm work and even with the help of V.L.A. and D.V.A., it looked like we weren't going to make it. We had to start from nothing and already a family of four. Then Albert went out to work through the winter, while I looked after the children and did the chores. He didn't make much while working out. Finally he sold the cattle and pigs and kept the milk cow. The money was used for paying debts.

The last year we were at Wanham farm, it was a very dry year. The wheat was scorched in the field. Albert went to work again and this time he found work in Terrace, B.C., and so we left Wanham in the summer of 1956. We regretted to leave, as we left behind all our wonderful neighbors, like Wades, Feniaks, Baranacs, Skages, Irelands and many more.

We had hard times and ups and downs, but we came through as good as possible with the good neighbors we had. We got help every time we needed it. Wades were our closest neighbors, and helped us out with almost everything, whenever we needed them.

When Lloyd, one of my boys burned his leg, Mrs. Bill Feniak gave us a ride to the health nurse in town and after that, Mrs. Wade took us. While I tied the cow in the barn one evening, the boys tried to start a fire in the stove, and Lloyd burned his leg. I had told them to wait as there was a fire in the heater, and I would light the cookstove fire when I came back. But luckily enough, the leg healed properly.

The boys liked to go to school. Their teachers were Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Klapstein and Mrs. Zmean, as I well remember.

TULIPS AND HOLLAND

We liked the Christmas concerts and one time I recall that Lloyd, then in grade one said to me, "Mrs. Zmean said to tell you that you have to go to school on the parent-teacher day." But Lloyd would not tell me why. I went and met Mrs. Zmean, and saw what the surprise was. The kids had colored tulips, and everywhere there were the colored pictures on the walls in the classroom. So that was the surprise as Mrs. Skage, another neighbor and I had both come from Holland. That sure was very nice, and I will never forget it.

JOHN REICHENBACH

submitted by Irene Weller

In 1931, my dad left Brooks, Alberta to try farming in the Peace River country. He loaded a boxcar with some livestock, machinery and household goods, and also took the two oldest children, Norma and Herb, with him in the boxcar. Money was scarce those days, so Norma and

Herb had to remain hidden at times so the railway officials wouldn't spy them. They finally arrived at Wanham, and Dad got a job working for George Reiswig in the sawmill. Mother, Lillian, Ann and I came a couple of weeks later on the passenger train. We kids were all under six years, so we could travel free.

It sure was different country from Brooks because we saw lots of trees and snow. We stayed in the sawmill camp until spring. When spring arrived, Dad rented the St. Pierre's farm, which then was home to us for three years. Here Dorothy was born.

CLOSE CALL

The following year Herb was old enough to drive a team of horses. So with Dad's permission, Herb, Norma, Lillian and I took a team and buggy and went to visit our aunt in Belloy for the day. On our way home, Lillian and I sat on a board for a seat, as the back seat had been removed. For some reason, Lillian and I didn't seem to have enough room, so we always kept poking each other in the ribs. When we had nearly arrived home, Lillian finally got fed up, so she gave me one big push, and off I fell, right between the wheels. The back wheel went over my head but slid off and in doing so tore off my ear, just so it hung by a thread. Dad, of course, heard the hollering and came a-running. I must have been a terrible sight, as one side of my head was mud and the other side was blood. With the help of the country nurse and some good neighbors, they got me cleaned up and took me to Spirit River. The doctor there stitched the ear back in place so neatly, that all that remains today is a small scar. I don't remember the doctor and nurse, but they sure did a super job.

After some time, Dad took up his homestead further east and built a log house on it. I don't recall the land location, but do remember that Frank Kanes lived one half mile south of us. Herb Aleys lived a half mile northeast from us and we visited often with them and really enjoyed the lovely flower beds in their yard.

BAREFOOT DAYS

I took my first five years of schooling at the Steele School. Those were the happy years. We used to walk to school bare-footed in the summertime, carrying our shoes. When we got to school we put our shoes on, but sometimes we didn't. We loved to walk when it rained and see who could make the largest feet with gumbo sticking on them. The roads were not gravelled those days, just country roads. I also remember when we kids were losing our baby teeth. Some came out easily, but others needed a little persuasion. I always had a make-believe dentist - Amy Babbs, and needless to say, never had a loose tooth long. While we were living in the Belloy District, Lawrence and James were born.

Dad was always looking for a better place, and from some friends heard that there were good farms over the Birch Hills, in the Smoky area. He sold his farm at Belloy and we moved again to the Smoky District. We felt like we were at the end of the world, as Dad's homestead was next to the meridian line and all the east country was

open. The Windy Creek twined all around our homestead to the Smoky River. James wasn't a well baby, and he passed away the first year we were here. Marion was born and our family was complete.

It seemed it was such a change living in this sandy place, especially in the summer as it got so hot. I can well recall an incident which happened on one of those real hot days. All of a sudden, Ann was gone and we searched and called but to no avail. Dad had built a smokehouse in a shaded place and it had been used a couple of days before. All of a sudden, Ann came crawling out and wondered what we had wanted. She had found a nice cool spot, but what she looked like was something else!

Mother always had a green thumb and her garden was always super. The vegetables always grew well in our sandy garden spot, watermelon and all kinds of vegetables. Dad dug a well about 25 feet deep, it sure turned out to be a good well. People came from all over to get water there. Mother always had a flock of geese, and one day they were gone. Luckily, Herb spied them a half mile from home. He ran after them and brought them back, just as they were about to go over the bank to the Smoky River.

My story would not be complete without mentioning the many friendly visits of Mr. Jack Merrill, who lived down by the Smoky River flats. Also many were the times when we kids could be seen and not heard, when Mr. Merrill and Dad were engaged in a friendly game of checkers.

WHOSE WHEEL WAS THAT?

The years seemed to pass by quickly and finally each one of us went on our way. In 1944, August Kozak and I were married, and we were the last couple married in the Peoria Church. We took up a homestead and started farming. The Don Bests and Orville and Vesta Berg were our close neighbors. Many were the experiences Vesta and I shared on our homesteads. Our means of transportation was a team of horses and a buggy, and many were the times we travelled together to town and other places with our girls, Beverly and Sharon. Coming home from Belloy one day, and going down the Birch Hills with the team really trotting, something rolled by us down the hill. We looked, and here it was the rim of our back wheel and we were driving on the spokes. We stopped as quickly as possible. We looked the situation over and stood there like a couple of ninnies, wondering what to do. We had a long way to go, and with two little girls and evening coming on we were getting worried. How relieved we were when Adolf Peddy came along. He put the rim back on, and with the help of some hay wire we were on our way once again. The wheel even lasted the rest of the summer.

Dad passed away in 1958. August, who had been working in the bush quite regularly, met with a fatal accident in 1961, and passed away quite suddenly. We had two children - Sharon, who is married to Harold Kindopp is living on a farm at Fahler with their two little girls. James married Mildred Williams, and they are living in Hannah with their two boys. He is employed with the C.N.R.

In August of 1963, I married Edwin Weller, and we lived on a ranch in the Hannah area. We sold our ranch in the spring of 1972 and moved to Lacombe. We bought a house in the Rosedale Valley, just outside of Lacombe where we are semi-retired at present. We have two children - Wally and Rochelle.

Mother and Ann are living in Vernon, B.C.; Herb lives in Williams Lake, B.C., and Lillian in Soda Creek, B.C. Lawrence is at Mission, B.C., Dorothy is living at Rycroft, Alberta, and Marion and Norma are in Edmonton.

LILLIAN (REICHENBACH) CAMPBELL

I took my grades 3-8 at Steele School, in the years 1931 to 1938, and part of grade ten in Wanham High School in 1939-40.

I remember that I won the prizes in high jumping at Steele School. Boys would tease me because I was so slender, and say,

"We can't have Lillian play ball today because the wind is blowing and it might blow her away!"

I remember being able to run fast and would win in the races at Sports Day, and come first in my age group.

HISTORY OF DAN AND LUCY REISWIG

submitted by Nancy Wageman

"There it is! There's our homestead!" shouted Dan as the wagons approached the cleared, burned-over land which he and his brothers had labored over for the past two years.

The year was 1927, and Dan was moving his family from Clairmont to Peoria in the Peace River Country. His wife, Lucy, and children: Helyne, age ten, Wilfred, eight, Alfreda (better known as Tootsie) six, Nancy, four and Harvey, one, soon forgot their sunburned noses and sore feet in the excitement of their new home.

During their stay in Peoria, the family lived in three houses. The first was a small log shack. Later they moved into a larger log house surrounded by vast fields of wheat, oats and barley. The fields stretched tranquilly across their 720 acres.

In the pasture near the house were several cows, who kept the family supplied with milk, cream and butter.



Mr. and Mrs. George Reiswig, Sr. An early settler in Peoria who cleared his homestead by hand.

CREAM ON THE RUN

Today was Nancy's turn to churn the cream into butter, which was done in the kitchen above the cellar door. Rock ... churn ... rock ... churn ... Nancy's hands became fatigued, as she imagined beads of sweat on her brow. The edges of her smile dropped drastically as she heard the giggles and shrieks of her brothers and sisters, playing a game on the lawn. Harder and harder she rocked, her little hands flying back and forth as they gripped the handle with fuming rage. Suddenly the churn burst, exploding butter-beaded cream all over Nancy and the cellar door. It seeped through the door's slits and cascaded down the steps. Stunned, Nancy ran through the house screaming, (a cry which became family famous.) "I spilled the cream! I sp-sp-spilled the cream!" Furthermore, the episode endured for several months with the aroma of souring cream in the cellar cracks.

TONSIL SLAUGHTER HOUSE

Wanham Community Hall became the place of the 'Tonsil Slaughter House!' The big day came when all the parents, including Dan and Lucy brought their children (dreaming of ice cream rewards) to the hall. Patiently each child waited on one of the cots that was placed about the floor, while the cool, sweet taste of ice cream seemed so near. But many a child's dream shattered, as he heard the groans of their anesthetized friends behind the stage curtain. A nurse, carrying a bucket past one's cot, sloshing with blood and tonsils, crashed ice cream completely out of mind. Tootsie, like so many others, totally lost her nerve. Nevertheless, a few ice cream fanatics still have sweet memories!

While the children were busy in their growing worlds, their father was, too. He and his brother, George, assembled the first sawmill of the area in his yard. Later they sold it and bought one with a planer from Sexsmith. They operated it in Wanham, which had only one other mill. Another machine Dan designed and built on his property was a shingle mill.

One evening after a supper of baked potatoes, fresh garden carrots and peas, Dan put down his fork and said,

"Lucy, I've been thinking a lot about the farm. Our 15-30 McCormick tractor works all right, but with a Caterpillar tractor, we could start plowing our land earlier in the spring. I know of only one in the whole prairie area, and there's about to be another!"

Soon many homesteaders came out to see Dan's new Caterpillar tractor. It turned out to be very useful, not just for farming, but also for building the Wanham and Belloy roads. Dan hooked a grader, made for horse-pulling, to the back of it, and with the help of brothers and neighbors, the trails of ruts, stones and bumps transformed into roads.

In 1928, the community worked together to build their first school. George Reiswig, O.L. Toftner and Dan made up the school board. They hired the first teacher, Miss Nichols. Following her were Miss Cox and Mrs. Moore. In addition to school, the schoolhouse was also used for church services.

Because money was needed to support the school, fund

raising basket socials livened up several evenings. A lady would make a lunch and pack it decoratively, to be auctioned off to the men. The man who bought it had the pleasure of her company, while they ate it together. Lucy greatly admired Mrs. Berg's heart-shaped box, delicately surrounded by blue paper violets. However, her white and pink cake-like box sold to Delmer Reiswig for eleven dollars. Lucy's sister, C.L.(Alfreda Seibel) experienced her heart dropping to her feet when an "old bachelor" bought her basket. Consequently, she barely endured the meal.

MY GUM

In 1929, the Reiswig family enlarged. Lucy gave birth to a boy, in their log house. They named him Edgar. Several years later, Edgar, who was well on his way to boyhood, trudged into the barn where his mom was milking a cow. Jumping over a barn cat, he went to the front of the serene bovine, quietly chewing it's cud. Several moments passed, as he watched his mother's skillful hands swish the milk into a pail. Suddenly his little foot stamped on the barn floor, as he shook his finger at the animal's head and a flurry of heated words

spurted out.

"Edgar! Whatever's the matter?" asked Lucy, startled.

"That bad cow," he replied, poking his lower lip out, "He's chewing my gum!"

The depression of the 1930's also affected the peace of Peace River. Nevertheless, Dan found a way to build a new and larger home for his growing family. Since gas was outrageously expensive, he sold his Model-A for \$125.00 and bought nails. With the use of the sawmill he owned, along with George, he acquired enough lumber.

Before long, a new, five bedroom home, dressed in coats of white paint stood on the Reiswig homestead. A fenced in, spacious lawn, shaded by a grove of poplar trees encompassed it. Lucy added touches of bright colours by planting pansies and sweet-peas in the scattered flower beds.

Grandma and Grandpa Reiswig lived in a small home just past the poplar tree grove. While the children and pet dog, Lowboe, kept them young, Lucy did their washing and frequently cheered them with her good cookin'.

At dusk one evening, a neighbor passing by was surprised to see bright lights coming out of the windows. He thought to himself, "Now I wonder how Dan managed that!"



Laughland Home

Dan had installed his own light plant, a gasoline run generator in the house basement, which gave light to the recent electric light bulb. This was a true novelty in the Peace River area.

The radio also appeared as a marvelous new invention to the north land.

"It's time for the Lone Ranger!" shouted Tootsie. Immediately the children, clad in pajamas, scrambled over to the radio. Soon the static and familiar blaring radio waves filled the room. Up on chairs and stools they climbed, all except Edgar. He landed on Helyne's lap. Not because he liked to, particularly, but the chairs had run out, and he had the fate of being the youngest. Yet, before long, he was perched on the floor with his eyes as wide as the others, as he listened to the horrible quandary the Lone Ranger was in.

Suddenly the story faded, and silence pervaded.

"Oh, no!" groaned Wilfred, "The batteries just died!"

"Quick, there's some in the basement," blurted Nancy. Chairs screeched and legs and arms flew, as they dashed towards the door and down the stairs. Harvey arrived first, but it was Wilfred who found the batteries. Soon the P.J. audience was back in place, with sighs of relief. With suspense and awe, they listened once again to the irrefutable heroic outcome of the Ranger.

Dan and Lucy's children grew strong under the Peace River sun. Even when the moon came out, they all kept alert over Harvey and his nightmares. One night his mother saved him from jumping out a window. Another time, while camping, his brothers and sisters pulled him back into the tent, during his escape from attacking Indians!

Wilfred, at fifteen was crowned the "Oat King," for the Peoria District. His fine quality grain won the competition sponsored by the Grain Grower Association, and the Pool Elevator. With the adventurous spirit of dawning manhood, he experienced his award trip to Edmonton.

On a very cold day in 1937, when the smoke from the chimneys of houses goes straight up, and snow muffles every sound, Helyne was married to a handsome suitor named Gustav Wageman. They were married in Peoria Seventh Day Adventist Church. Though the weather was sixty below zero, warmth glowed in everyone's heart.

Helyne gave birth to their first child in the Peace River Country in 1939, a girl they named Teddy.

In 1939, Dan and his family moved from Peoria to Winfield, British Columbia. Winfield is also the place where Dan and Lucy live currently (1978). They have fifteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren, a number prone to expand!

Although Dan is retired, he has recently built a portable sawmill and several 40 foot live rollers for his son, Edgar; a band saw, cedar chests, cupboards out of old television sets, and other items. Moreover, Dan's machine shop attracts many neighbors, and with his help, their ill equipment returns to health. Also, Dan is perpetually looking at property that's up for sale, and dreaming of building again. Incidentally, he and Lucy have moved at least fifty times in their past 62 years of marriage.

Lucy is still known for her warm meals and hugs, by her family. Often they return to eat at her table, though now their feet touch the floor, and they have homes of their own.

She walks a mile in the early morning, and enjoys piecing quilts, knitting, crocheting and gardening.

Peace River holds many precious memories for Dan and Lucy, and with all their hearts, they look forward to the day when they can homestead by the real River of Peace with their Lord, family and friends.



Reiswig Brothers and their wives. Left to Right: Peter and Elsie, William and Martha (visiting), George and Myrtle, Dan and Lucy and Fred and Annie.

MR. AND MRS. FRED REISWIG FAMILY

by Harriet Kandt

Mr. Fred Reiswig and his wife, Annie Ziprick, homesteaded in Peoria in 1923, renting land in Clarmont for one year, and taking up permanent residence in Peoria in the spring of 1926.

When they arrived here there were only two other settlers in the Peoria District; Roy Leverington and the O.L. Toftners. Many of the newcomers who were looking for homestead land in the area were always welcomed at the Reiswig home. Mother recalls many days in our one-roomed log cabin when there were so many sleeping on the floor she had difficulty maneuvering a path to the kitchen stove to make bannock.

Because of the long distance to any medical help, mother always came out well prepared for any emergencies, with castor oil being her mainstay for everything from mental depression to constipation. Irving recalls, "One had to be careful not to sniffle, or you would be liable for a shot of the stuff."

Dad farmed until 1939; left for two years, then returned and farmed until 1950, moving once more to Winfield, B.C., where he passed away in September 1958. Mother is residing in the Sherwood Park nursing home in Edmonton.

Horses were the means of transportation and farming at that time, and roads were never snow plowed. After dark when there was snow on the ground one knows how hard it is to see. On one such an evening Trudy, at the age of six years, was walking with Dave and commented, "Good thing horses leave some buns so we can see where we're going." She was also very inquisitive about the facts of life at that time. One morning Irving and Dad

were out milking the cows in the barn when Trudy arrived on the scene. Walking back and forth, back and forth seemingly looking for something she questioned, "Dad, where is the door on the cow where the baby calves come from?"

WATCH IRVING

Irving was being impressed by other things at the early age of ten years. When he and Dad arrived by train at Wanham, April 1, 1926, Dad sent Irving to the Wanham store, owned by Peter Tansem, to get a box of Mica axle grease for two bits. When he returned he said to Dad, "That Vera girl there in the store is sure the prettiest girl I ever saw." Dad's reply was simply, "yea - uh huh?" It's still not safe to send Irving around where there are pretty girls.

Fred and Annie have four children: *Irving* married Ruth French and still lives in Peoria and farms with three of his boys. Their six children are: Keith, of Chetwynd, and his wife Helen Rudzuk, Doug and Kendall; Karen (Mrs. Edgar Boettcher) of Lacombe, Shelly, Shonnie and Starla; Reginald, his wife Donna Wendland, Drena, Brian and Treasa; Lacey (Mrs. Richard Dick) of Peoria, Delwyn and Darnell; Bernie, his wife Donna Lang, Richelle and Trevor of Peoria; Rollie, his wife Judy Marshall, D'Lane, of Peoria.

Alfred married Grace Ritchey and lives in Westbridge, B.C. Their children are: Loewen; Milo, his wife Jeanee, Treasa and Mickey; Barry, his wife Jeanie, Sarah.

Harriet (Mrs. David Kandt) still lives in Peoria and they farm with their son. Randall's wife is Marty McCreery, Karla and Leonard are their two children.

Trudy (Mrs. Fred Dunn) of North Burnaby, B.C. has two daughters, Shauna and Tami.



Mr. and Mrs. Pete Reiswig's Family. Left to Right: Ezra Reiswig, Esther Reiswig, Verna Moser, Rosie Reiswig, Laura Moser and Harold Reiswig.

fire, and I was warned not to roll into the fire in my sleep. The fire served two purposes; one, to keep warm, and two, to keep the wild animals away.

Next morning, bright and early, on our way we went, following the narrow trail - just wide enough for the wagon to get through.

BUTTERMILK BATH

We soon came to the part of the trail which was very zig-zagging up and down, leading to the Bad Heart River. Uncle Dan's team led the way. He looked back, checking how we were faring, and the next minute he looked back and let out a hearty laugh, for what he saw would make anybody laugh. My dad was covered from head to toe with buttermilk. He was hanging on to the reins for dear life, going down a very steep part of the trail. The twenty pound syrup pail filled with buttermilk standing in the front end of the wagon blew the lid, when the wagon wheel hit a solid stump.



Mr. and Mrs. Pete Reiswig.

HAROLD REISWIG

This will take you back to the year of about 1926, and as I remember, my first journey to Peoria, Alberta. My dad and I started out from a farm located south-west from Clairmont with a wagon and team of horses, one early summer morning. Uncle Dan was just ahead, with another wagon drawn by two horses. As we travelled slowly along, I noticed that we were entering more and more wilderness. I just cannot remember where we stayed the first night, but it was in the woods. We had a camp-



Harold and Ruby Reiswig on their Wedding Day - June 30, 1938.

By nightfall we reached Uncle Dan's homestead, where he had a small bunkhouse.

After putting in the summer clearing land by hand and fighting mosquitoes day and night, we went back to Clairmont.

The next time we came to Peoria, Dad moved lock, stock and barrel. He shipped cows, calves, horses and farm machinery, such as it was, by boxcar on the railway to Wanham. From there we, along with another family, namely the William Davis family, made our way over the

winding, muddy trail to Peoria. No one can imagine how muddy and rough the trail was unless you travelled it yourself. This was the 16th day of June, 1927.

Dad made slow and steady progress on the farm, but in 1929, the depression hit like a bomb-shell! At harvest time, wheat was \$1.30 per bushel, but by February it was 60 cents, and dropping. The farmer who shipped a steer found that the animal did not even pay the freight. A team load of oats, which was about 50 bushels, brought \$4.25.



Four generations of the Reiswig family. Pete, Harold, Marjorie and Kaurie Cliffe.

COOKED WHEAT FOR DESSERT

Homesteading is homesteading, but surviving it in the depression years was another story. We ate cooked wheat for breakfast, moosemeat and potatoes for dinner, and for supper, moosemeat with cooked wheat for dessert. We lived, but I developed a dislike for moosemeat that has lasted to this day.

People used parts of hides for footwear, made homespun yarn for knitting, and I did see small notched sticks used as buttons. To keep warm, there was only one way, hand sawed firewood. People never locked their doors, not even at night. I remember one morning there was a stranger sitting by the heater, who had dropped in during the night to keep from freezing to death.

Homesteaders had to more than build some kind of shelter for a home; they next built a school and a church. As the years passed by, the old house was replaced by a better one, and so it was with the school and church. People moved in to the district, homesteaded and proved up their homesteads, and sold out. Peoria grew and grew to the point where you see it today. As the district grew, there came a post office. The first one was run by George Reiswig, then by Albert Wright and Dorse Prosser.

In 1934, I became interested in starting a store in a big way, handling all farm supplies including gas and oils. I soon found that I needed a store clerk. In those days it was cheaper to marry one than to hire one, and to a

pretty girl, the offer of three meals and half a bed sounded pretty good. To this day, she has never said 'yes' to the idea, but in her code book, no means yes, and that should clarify why after forty years she is still behind the store counter. What's more, I discovered that I eat some of my best meals at home.

Strange as it may seem, it used to take two days to go to Grande Prairie and it took another two days to return. Today this is done in just two hours or less.



Harold and Ruby Reiswig's store in Peoria. They are still in business. How do you fill up at that gas pump?

REUM, HERMAN AND RUBY LAST OF THE HOMESTEADERS?

submitted by Ruby Reum

Herman Reum was born in Ryley Alberta, 60 miles east of Edmonton; one of ten children born to the Martin Reum family. Martin came originally as an emigrant from Trondheim, Norway, settling first in Minot, North Dakota and later purchasing a parcel of Hudson's Bay land, ten miles south of Ryley.

Herman grew up on the farm, living with his parents until the outbreak of World War II, when at the age of seventeen he joined the Royal Canadian Navy. They did not question him when he said he was eighteen, as no doubt they were desperate for recruits. Here he served on active duty until the war ended. He came home from the war and purchased his father's farm, and began to establish himself as a farmer. He had farmed for nearly four years when I came on the scene.

At this time there was a shortage of school teachers and the school divisions were trying to alleviate the situation by setting up correspondence centres in the rural schools and hiring people to supervise them. I went to Ryley in 1949 to supervise such a centre in Salt Lake School, situated on a corner of the Reum farm. Also I stayed with Herman's aunt, so it was inevitable that we should become acquainted. We started dating and on July 16, 1950 we were married in the senior Reum's house, the same house, in fact, where Herman was born.

It seemed that our roots were firmly planted, but fate was to decree otherwise. In the summer of 1959, we decided to visit relatives in the Grande Prairie and Belloy areas. I had been north before, but this was to be Her-



Left to Right: Douglas, Duane, Baby Paul, Linda, Patsy.

man's first visit. We had our three children along - Duane, Linda and Douglas. They were eight, seven and four years of age, respectively. They had never travelled so far away from home before, so I suppose the journey seemed endless. When we reached Valleyview, Duane said, "Are we still on the world, Dad?"

BEE STING

The trip ended at Arne and Anne Sorensens south of Belloy corner, where we planned to visit a couple of days, Anne being Herman's cousin. On the weekend they took us down on the Smoky River flats for a picnic. We had finished a very delicious picnic lunch and were just relaxing, enjoying the incredibly beautiful scenery, when simultaneously we heard some screams and buzzing sounds. The kids had accidentally disturbed a wild bee's nest! One had stung Duane just below the left ear. We were shocked to witness huge hives form all over his face and arms, and within seconds he was so swollen as to be almost unrecognizable. Even his eyes were closed from the swelling. We rushed him to Spirit River Hospital where they treated him with antihistamines, and kept him in overnight. We were certainly glad the next morning to find him almost back to normal.

The north country has always held a fascination for many people and we were no exception. We were told that, "If you drink water from the Peace you will always come back." I'm convinced that saying is not far from the truth! We fell in love with the country with its winding rivers and valleys, the long ridges of hills, the majestic mountains to be seen west of Grande Prairie, and the clear, sharp morning air. We were entranced by the fields of rapeseed, blooming yellow in the summer sun. This was not a familiar crop to us as we grew mostly wheat, oats and barley. Our enthusiasm showed because Arne said, "Why don't you file on a homestead. There's still land to get around here."

Well, the idea was planted and began to grow. We toyed around with the idea of selling our farm in the south. We even went so far as to look at some farms that were for sale in the area.

Back home in Ryley, Herman decided to go up to

Edmonton and see what procedures were necessary to follow in regard to filing on a homestead. In fact, he went ahead and filed on one! Being a veteran, it didn't matter that he already owned land. As there were other applications, a draw had to be made. Destiny prevailed, and Herman's name was drawn. He was now the owner of a homestead lease!

We made a second journey up north and with Arne Sorenson's help, located our homestead which turned out to be five miles south of Wanham. There were twelve acres broken and a nice dam of water.

Now we began to set our plans in motion. Daniel, another Reum brother wanted to buy the home farm. By the time the other deal went through a couple of years later, farmland in the Peace had started to increase in value, and we no longer had one in sight for the right price. In the meantime, we had moved up to Grande Prairie. We had a new addition to our family, Patsy, who was five and one-half months old when we moved. After living in town a few months we moved our family out to a farm house near Buffalo Lakes, which we rented very cheaply, and we lived there for two years. Herman purchased a small cat and backhoe, and began putting in water and sewer systems around the country.

More and more the idea of moving to the homestead began to appeal to us. Paul Curtis our last baby was born on Good Friday, April 12, 1963 and the next spring we moved out to the homestead.

We had purchased a small house from Emil Janot of Peoria. We were really crowded with our five lively children when we set up residence in the house (which we moved to the farm). It was quite a challenge with no water or sewer, or even electricity. We hauled water from the dam and Belloy spring. For light we used a coal oil lamp that Mrs. Janot had given us, and we had our little 'Kozy Korner' out back of the house.



Paul and Patsy in front of first house on the homestead.

HEART ATTACK!

We were only on the homestead a few weeks when we

experienced a very disturbing incident. Herman's brother, Oscar who lived in Clairmont at the time, came out to visit us for the weekend. His wife and family were away visiting in Camrose. We had spent the day at Dunvegan, having a picnic and returning home in the early evening. Oscar decided to go for a walk, which had been quite unlike him. He had been rather quiet all day, probably missing his family. Usually he was such a "life of the party" sort of person. About an hour or so after he left, I heard Herman urgently calling me to come and help him with Oscar. Apparently he had been at the south side of the farm, when he was stricken with what he thought was severe indigestion. He managed to get to within about 500 feet from the house, when he collapsed. We helped him into the house and tried to persuade him to let us take him to the hospital. By this time we realized that he had more than simple indigestion. As we had no telephone, Herman drove in to Jacobsen's to phone Melvin, another brother who lived in Grande Prairie. He promised to come right out. Herman hurried home and by now Oscar had such severe pain that he was willing to go for medical aid. They set off for the hospital, meeting Melvin and son Bob, on the way.

The doctor diagnosed it as a severe heart attack. Herman and Melvin asked to see him, and they were told that they could see him shortly, but an electrocardiograph was being taken. About twenty minutes later the doctor came out of the room with the sad news that Oscar had passed away. His heart had stopped and none of their emergency measures had worked. He was forty-four years old and left a wife and six children.



Paul and Lassie.

MARK AND LASSIE

Oscar owned two beautiful German Shepherd dogs. When he died, we kept the dogs. The male was a large splendid dog named Mark, and his mate was named Lassie. They were gentle dogs, devoted to the kids and very good watch dogs. One day a nephew, Billy was visiting and began playing with the kids, chasing them around the house. He had been about to catch Linda, when he found himself flat on the ground, completely straddled by Mark. He was not harmed, but Mark held him there until Herman called him off. What really made it funny was the fact that Billy was over six feet tall!

Mark had a very bad habit. He couldn't leave the porcupines alone. More than once, Herman had spent several hours pulling out quills. I went to Ryley that summer for three weeks to look after Grandma Reum

who was not well. Duane stayed to help his dad, and the others went with me. Herman and Duane were away several days at a time putting in water and sewer systems around LaGlance. One day they came home to find an R.C.M.P. officer at our place. A neighbor passing by had noticed Mark lying in the yard, completely infested with porcupine quills. Thinking we would be away for some time, the neighbor contacted the R.C.M.P. The dog was in such bad shape that Herman asked the officer to put him out of his misery.

Lassie remained with us several years, a wonderful pet, until the time of her death.

DISASTER

Later that summer Herman purchased a gas operated light plant. He set it up in a storage shed behind the house. This was quite a convenience for me, as now I could use my electric washing machine and other appliances, as well as having electric lights at night. I would start it up only when I needed it. One day when I was washing clothes, the washing machine quit, suddenly. I was on my way to the door to check the light plant, when I noticed billows of smoke floating past the window. I dashed outside and, to my horror the storage shed was a mass of flames! The light plant must have shorted out in some way, and sparks ignited the gas fumes. There was nothing I could do about the fire as there was no water, and it wouldn't have helped if there was, as the fire was beyond control. I rushed back into the house and sent the kids off to the barn and began taking things out of the house, as I knew that should the wind change direction, everything would go. However the house was not damaged, but the shed burned to the ground, along with approximately one thousand dollars worth of tools, pumps, etc., and no insurance coverage.

PONT

Linda had a little grey kitten that she grew very attached to. It caught its first mouse shortly after it was weaned. The mouse was almost as large as the kitten. Unfortunately the kitten was run over by a car and her life was ended. This caused Linda untold grief, so to placate her, we promised her a new pet as soon as possible. One day not long after, Linda came rushing off the school bus to say with excitement, "Mom, could I get any kind of cat I want?" I answered, "Sure, you can." The next day she came home from school carrying a large tabby cat and it was very obviously pregnant. What could I say?

Linda named the cat Pont and she was to become a very favored family pet, except for a couple of times a year when she was very unpopular with Herman and me, at least. For she was to present us with a large batch of kittens twice a year without fail, as long as she was with us. That was a lot of years, because it was just a little over a year ago that she disappeared to return no more!

Gradually the farm began to look like one and not just a wilderness. The land was cleared and broken. The first 52 acres was done by John Kaspro and later more was done by Jim Dean and Langnes Co-op. Herman trenched

in the water, about 800 feet from the dam and we acquired Alberta Power. He worked closer to home now continuing with the backhoe work around Wanham, Belloy, Peoria and TeePee Creek.

FRIENDLY MOOSE

One year we put up alfalfa for hay and stacked it about 300 yards from the house, as we had some horses and a few head of cattle. That winter two moose began to feed on the stacks. As time passed they would feed just across the fence from the horses and were very tame. The domestic animals gradually took them for granted and it was a really nice experience.

The years passed by quickly. Duane, Linda and Patsy all graduated from Wanham School. Doug quit school in grade eleven and went to work for Shea's Auto in Grande Prairie for awhile. Duane purchased more land, and he and his dad farm together, discontinuing the backhoe work and spending most of their time running the farm. Duane married Ruth Kasprow from Wanham. They and their two children, James and Jenine live across the road from us. Linda worked as a clerk-stenographer in Grande Prairie court house for a few years, then married Brad Brown from TeePee Creek. They live on the farm, adjoining ours to the south. They have two children, Brandon and Jade. Brad also drives back and forth daily, to his job with Allied Welding at a gas plant south of Grande Prairie. Douglas works in Wanham for the U.G.G. He makes his home in Wanham with his wife Donna and little girl, Misty Rae. Donna is the former Donna Kamm of Grande Prairie. Patsy works for Alberta Transportation in Grande Prairie and is engaged to Earl Blois, another Wanhamite. Paul is still attending high school in Wanham.

HENRY (HANK) AND MURIEL RIEGER W 1/2 7-79-3-W6th

On August 15th, 1947, from Delia, Alberta, I responded to an Alberta Government advertisement in the Calgary Herald: "Notice to Veterans of World War II".

On August 28, 1947, I received a letter from Alberta Directors of Lands, V.A. Woods, "Please be advised that at the public draw held on August 26th, 1947, for lands cleared and being broken by contract in the Wanham area, your name was drawn No. 2."

On September 17th, 1947, I drove from Delia to Wanham. I stayed overnight in the Wanham Hotel, owned by N.E. Tanner and managed by Bud Ireland. Then drove north from Wanham, crossing the Burnt River over a Lassiter-made earth dam. A cable and chair was strung above the river in case the dam should be washed out.

At the Lassiter camp I was directed to follow a "cutline" to my homestead. I found the survey stake and then attempted to see topography. The land was covered with a very dense stand of fire killed poplar; trees up to 40 feet tall and 10 inches thick and some spruce 60 feet tall and 20 inches thick; and several bunches of willows.



A D.W.S. Bee - 1956. Back Row: Nip Green, Roy Krough, Mickey McNamee, Fred Shattuck. Front Row: Dot McNamee, Kay McGinnis, Sophie Futo, Denny Palmer, Dick Green, Muriel Rieger.

On my return to Wanham I met a pioneer farmer, Mr. Leriger, who took the time to tell me of some of the local farming methods. He encouraged me to homestead in the area.

In the spring of 1948 I arrived in Rycroft on the N.A.R., with a boxcar of 'Settlers Effects', and a lot of hope.

That first spring, although 300 acres had been approved by the government inspector as ready for cultivation, I thought it was too rough and only sowed 15 acres. Those were not worth harvesting. Although there were some poor years, that was the only year of a total loss.

The first school was a granary on the McNamee farm. The first teachers were Miss Yanishewski, Tom Tanton, Miss Metz, Alex Kozeluk, Mrs. Jennings and Nick Shmyr.

The Lassiter School was built on the S.E. corner of the S.E. 1/4 16-3-W6th. Volunteers donated four days of free labour, and any additional time worked was paid for by the Spirit River School Division. The school served as a community centre for several years.

On August 19, 1951, an official opening of the Burnt River bridge was held. The contractor for the clearing project was O.B. Lassiter of Bassano, Alberta. The settlers agreed to name the bridge in his honor.

On February 27, 1956, Muriel Norris and I were married in Grande Prairie. We lived in my 'shack', a 12'



A D.W.S. Bee - 1956. Back Row: Myron Crocker, Bill McGinnis, Curt Mills, Sven Hansen, Tom Tanton, Marion Moore. Front Row: In truck - Dennis Palmer, Dick Green, Bob Wade, Henry Rieger, Vic Krefting, Roy Krough, Earl Ginrich, Bob Morgan, Barney Archer.

x 14' granary, until the house I had started was almost ready the following spring.

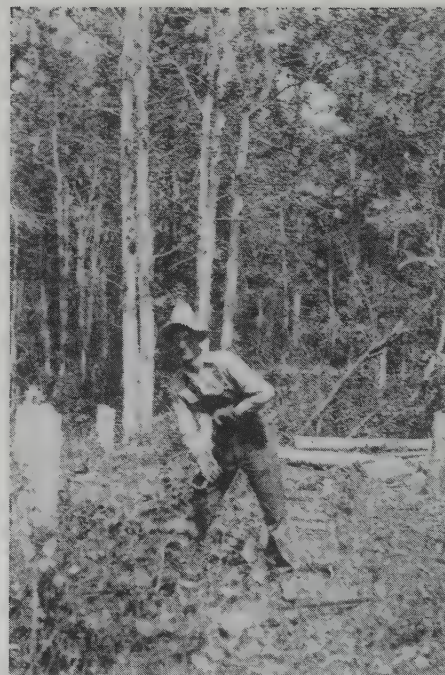
DISAPPOINTMENT

A disappointment to Muriel and me was to see the start of 12 families moving away from their homesteads, in 1959. Several of the families with their belongings went west, past our farm. They were compelled to leave because of the poor roads and the long distances to market, doctor and the lack of adequate school opportunity. This was a very heart-breaking experience for all of us. Each of these families had children and there is some satisfaction to know that the children did receive an education and are now doing well. Many of them returned to the Wanham and district reunion in 1977, and it was evident that they were doing well.

On June 20, 1955, I received title to my homestead.

In 1959, I signed a contract with the Spirit River Rural Electrification Association for \$1,155.00.

The Alberta Government Telephones installed underground cable on November 12, 1966. The monthly rent charge was \$3.00.



A.J. Rogers setting charges on the Wanham road in 1928.

ARMSTRONG
546-0242

VERNON
342-3652

VANCOUVER
733-8655

6746 8/33

A. J. ROGERS WHOLESOME FOODS
FLOUR & CEREALS

A. J. ROGERS

R.R. #3
ARMSTRONG, B.C.

A.J. Rogers Business Card.



The Rogers puffed wheat factory in Peoria going up in smoke - 1934.

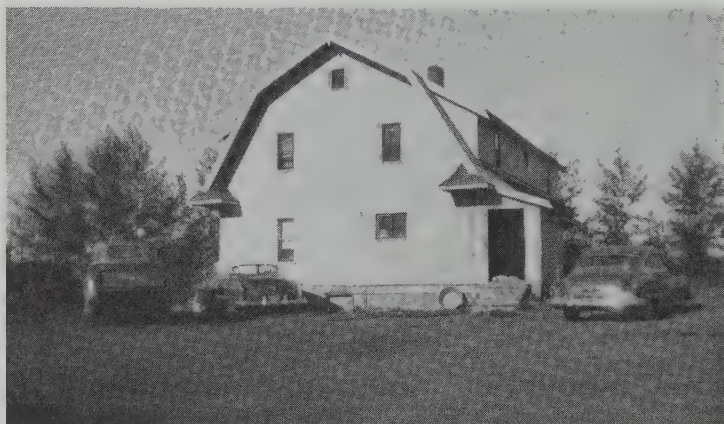


Rebuilt puffed wheat factory in Peoria - 1935.

MR. AND MRS. W.J. ROTTACKER

William (Bill) Rottacker came to Peoria from Blackfalds, Alberta, in June, 1928, with one boxcar of things. Included in that boxcar were a team of horses, a cow and a heifer for Jake Berg. In Blackfalds Will had done a lot of clearing and breaking land with four horses and a one bottom breaking plow. He had made a little platform to stand on and remembers hitting a stump and being thrown off. The horses were so tired they didn't even run away. So clearing and breaking land was nothing new to Will. Here in Peoria he broke about 40 acres where he later built his house and barn. He also cleared and broke about 20 acres where the school now stands. His sister, Lill Berg, helped him with clearing that summer. He would chop the roots of the tree, hook a chain higher up on the tree and Lill drove the team of horses to pull the tree down. He also built a small house 13 x 17 feet before returning to Blackfalds to harvest his crop there. Will had taken up a homestead in Peoria in 1926.

Calvin remembers when he was ten years old his dad had made a sturdy harrow using layers of willows lashed



The W.J. Rottacker home.



The Rottacker Family - 1941. Back Row, Left to Right: Howard, Warren, Walter Olson, Russell, Calvin, Leonard. Front Row: Elva holding Raydene, Will, Dolly and Barbara.

together. He went out to watch his dad work with this implement and horses. His dad decided this was a good time for Calvin to start farming so he showed him what to do and left him to do it.

The family, Dolly and their five children: Elva (11), Calvin (9), Russell (7), Warren (almost 3) and baby Howard just one month old, arrived in Wanham by train on November 20, 1928. Leonard was born in 1930. Dan Reiswig met the train with his car to take them to Peoria. The train trip had taken the better part of two days and one night. They came on a settlers train that was so crowded that there wasn't room enough for the children to lie down on the seat to sleep. Otto Nolde was one of the settlers on the train and carried a large knapsack.

The Bill Davis family, Sather families, Myrland family, Olsen family with George, Lester and Lilly, were all neighbors to Rottackers in Blackfalds and came to this area as well. The Sather families have built a fine family farm in Wanham.

Rottacker's equipment came on a flatcar: the steam engine, threshing machine, tractor, plows and sawmill. The boxcar carried household effects in one end and livestock in the other end. Will and Melvin rode in the boxcar with the livestock. They brought two horses, two cows and two heifers. By summer they lost two horses and two cows, one of the cows ate poison weed down by Kadot Creek. Their household effects included a piano, dining room suite, beds, stove and nine sacks of potatoes.

Mrs. Rottacker remembers the stove, table, beds and cupboard against the outside walls with the sacks of potatoes in the center of the room to keep them from freezing. There were no potatoes available here.

Hard work and long hours was a way of life for the pioneers and Will and Dolly were no exception. With his

threshing machine Will threshed grain for many people.

They built their house in 1931 - 1932, moving into it in January, 1932. Their living room was the largest room in the community so their home became the center for group gatherings. Many weddings, social evenings and meetings were held there. Dolly always had men to cook for and a lot of other work so she hired young women to help her. Some of these girls had their own wedding in Rottacker's house.

Will's interest in the sawmill from Blackfalds. The first mill was owned by George and Dan Reiswig and was set up about three miles south of Wanham. Fred Reiswig and Lawrence Toftner did the logging and some of the Ziprick sisters did the cooking. When they moved the mill to George Reiswig's yard in Peoria, Will bought out Dan's interest. After a few years there, Will bought out George's interest and set up the mill in his own yard.

Irving remembers one winter when 52 teams were hauling logs from the bush north of Peoria. The shrill sound of the steam engine whistle at the sawmill was a



The Rottacker Sawmill in their yard - Bill Rottacker and Herb Reichenbach.



Mrs. W.J. Rottacker on her 70th Birthday.

sound long to be remembered by those who heard it from day to day.

Fred Bennett remembers convoys from 7 to 8 army trucks, Studebaker 6 x 6, coming from Dawson Creek to buy lumber for the army construction projects at Dawson Creek. The roads were almost non-existent. They came in the winter with the thermometer registering 30 degrees below zero fahrenheit. One truck was loaded with gas for the other trucks to use. They never stopped the trucks but kept them running all the time they were here. Dolly made supper for them then moved the dining room table to the side of the room and made beds on the floor. One man was determined to drive into Wanham even though the boss didn't want him to go. Reluctantly the boss agreed to let him go providing he would not stop the truck. He went into Wanham and the truck stopped. The boss had to send another truck in to pull that truck to get it started again. They spent two days loading lumber and the boss of the army crew told Will to go check the loads and not to short himself.

Will also supplied the lumber for an elevator at Hines Creek. Will and Calvin hauled the lumber with two trucks across the Peace River on the ferry. They also hauled lumber with a sleigh or sloop and cat at Wanham. They had to rough-lock the sleigh going down the Wanham hill to keep it from running into the cat.

Mr. W.J. Rottacker also supplied the lumber for the first U.G.G. elevator in Wanham, that is still there. Up to that time men that worked for Mr. Rottacker took lumber for wages as there was no cash in the thirties. This elevator project brought cash to the employees. The elevator company wanted boards 16" - 18" wide for the leg. So Mr. Rottacker sent some men into the bush on the Birch Hills and they were able to find enough large trees to supply the lumber for the leg of the elevator."

The mill was moved after several years to north of Belloy springs, then to Hythe. The mill was about 40 miles out in the bush with the planer mill in Hythe. The first winter Dave Littman sawed for Will with Harry and Albert Davis skidding the logs. Martha Davis cooked for some of the men that worked in the bush. The mill and logging operation again provided winter employment for

men. The men ate meals in the cookhouse and a 110 volt power plant provided electricity.

In 1956 the mill was moved to Silver Valley with the planer mill at Rycroft. With the logging and sawmill business, Rottackers invested in heavy equipment and got involved with clearing land and breaking it. Men in this area worked for Will summer and winter and were able to get lumber for their own use or got land cleared and broke up.



Will and Dolly Rottacker on their 66th Wedding Anniversary.

Will was influential in working with Mr. Fimrite, M.L.A. for Spirit River, in getting better roads in this area. His also promoted rural electrification for this area. Will and Chris Weis drove around getting people to sign up for the power line. He was president for 23 years of the Peoria-Smoky R.E.A.

On November 16, 1980, Will and Dolly celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary. In March, 1981, Will is going to be 88 years old and Dolly will be 88 in June. Both are doing real well, living in their home with son Howard.

Their six children are no longer living in Peoria area. They have 14 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

Elva and Walter Olson live at Lacombe. Their three married daughters are Raydene, Valerie and Merlo.

Bob and Raydene Lehman live at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Bob is a teacher and pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist church. They have two sons, Arlo and Brent, and one girl, Deana Rae.

Valerie and Vern Simanton farm at Foremost, Alberta. Their children are Bradley and Holly.

Merlo and Lonnie Suelzle farm at Lacombe, Alberta, and have three boys: Londell, Leon, and Michael.

Calvin and Barbara (Oliver) Rottacker have retired from farming and live at Kelowna, B.C. Their children are Mona Lee, Laird and Arlana.

Mona Lee is married and lives with her family at Kitwanga, B.C. Their children are Tammie, Rickie and a baby girl.

Laird lives and works in Red Deer, Alberta.

Arlana is attending school at Canadian Union College at Lacombe, Alberta.

Russell and Ruth (Cooksley) Rottacker live at Lodi, California as do their four married daughters and one son: Sherry, Margo, Deana, Kathy and Bradley.

Sherry has two girls: Cherri and Amy. Margo's son is Brian and Deana has one boy, Troy and one girl, Nikki.

Bradley is going to school to be a chiropractor.

Warren married Evelyn Grauman from the Belloy-Smoky area. Warren lives and works at Enderby, B.C.

Leonard married Dolly Reihl and they have two sons, Dale and Dean. Leonard has a son Kerry by a second marriage. Leonard lives and works at Tacoma, Washington.

Howard lives at home with his folks.

CLARENCE RUDE

by Rodney Rude

"Go north, young man, go north, the hunting is great, an opportunity you'll never forget, you hope! - unlimited resources. With an axe and a shovel, you'll get all you want on a quarter section of land."

With the persuasion of William and Pearl Brown, Clarence and Nina Rude packed their new 1928 Studebaker car and a four wheel trailer, left Chico, California in October, 1930, and headed for the great Peace River Country.

Landing in Peoria in early winter they waited for spring, which they thought would never come - and when it did arrive, they were too broke to return to California. There was no other choice but to stay. In which case, the car and trailer became the property of Olaf and Lawrence Toftner for the price of a team of horses and a plow, and thus began the career of farming.

In 1934, pigweed greens, moose meat and potatoes, and moose meat, and more moose meat and potatoes were not too bad!

Yes, the old timers will tell you, "Boys, one shot is all you get. Bullets are hard to come by, without any money to buy them." And now they will say, "Beware, things are heading that way again."



Clarence Rude and Hjalmer Johnson providing themselves with a grub stake.

BEN RUSSELL

We arrived in Wanham August 16, 1946. The first rain worth speaking about for the district was falling, and as a result, people were happy. We wondered why, with all that slush!



Ben Russell

It was a little heart-breaking for us, and some tears were shed by those old enough to realize just how far north we were. For the train had crawled further into the northwest, and snow appeared around McLennan - Eskimo Land for sure.

LAUGHY'S COFFEE SHOP

However, after disembarking onto the smallest wooden depot platform from the train, we finally got a lift via dray, to Laughy's Coffee Shop. We were greeted very warmly by the little girl who was serving hot chocolate and toast, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. It was cozy and warm in the shop. It seemed that we had been cold all the way from Edmonton on the N.A.R. It took such a long time, and travel time was slow, taking from five p.m. to 10 a.m., with four children all under six years. Sharon, the baby, was only one year old. We sat in straight-backed seats, so high off the floor, one could not rest ones feet in comfort.

In due time, the chairman of the local school board, Emil Sather, picked us up in his 1936 Ford, and took us up the muddy hill to the school. Some of his children, (seems I remember Ann and Buddy in particular) running along the banks, urging the Ford on up the muddy hill to the school, and welcoming us to Wanham.

The teacherage was in the process of being re-painted by Mr. Laughy. As a result, debris was all over. There was a hole in the living room wall that looked as if a baby elephant had been thrown through! We recalled that we had had the pleasure of restoring another teacherage, and we could see that this one had a lot of potential.

When Mr. Sather left us, we got busy, and things took shape by evening. Mr. Russell was principal of Wanham South Slope School for eight years, with grades one to twelve. When we arrived, there were three or four teachers. Before we left, there were six or seven.

BROKEN GLASS

The school also needed a friend. Window panes were missing, and other things had to be mended and set right.



Left to Right: Ben Russell, Ed Pearce, Tony Korble.

Being the efficient person he was, and with the school board providing new panes for the windows, Mr. Russell had the high school boys put them in, under his supervision. A rule was made, that whoever broke a pane would pay for and replace the same. As a result, window breaking became nil.

Among the highlights of our stay in Wanham, I remember the enjoyment of musical festivals, with South Slope making a nice showing for points at the top. As a doting mother, I recall the pleasure of hearing Ramona sing the last item. Her instructor, Ozanne Prevost said, "The best for the last!" Frankie Beamer's rendition was outstanding, too, and the high school's choral singing was enjoyed. At lunch time, everyone pitched in and helped. We enjoyed meeting pupils and teachers from neighboring schools, and the adjudicators from Rycroft and Spirit River.

Then there was Labor Day, when Mr. Russell had the whole school involved in cleaning up and beautifying the school yard. Alan Sather and his big truck took all the big boys up the south hill to get spruce and other kinds of trees to plant.

Somehow in all this, Bill Manson stands out clearly. I remember how all the little people were shoved back while the great tall flag pole was ceremoniously erected, and stood for years after we were gone.

The masquerade and New Year's dances were enjoyed. What a night when the whole town got involved in a Klondike night, with Mrs. Manson as Klondike Kate; and who could forget the night Mr. Russell's team curled all night, and won!

The pupils made good marks. Mr. Russell said they were great kids. The gold medal for grade nine was won by Phyllis Sather. Good results in grades was what Mr. Russell worked for, and they came forth. There were bad times, and there were unpleasant times, but we will just let them lie.

We had six children:

Zoe - Supervised first year at Peoria. She married Don Woolard in Wanham. Don mink farmed for 16 years. They now live in Thorsby, where he works for International Airport. They have two children.

Ramona - was 13 on her arrival in Wanham. She finished her matriculation and went into the Airforce. She married Alan Sather, who spent 23 years as a pilot. Ramona got her degree in teaching 15 years after her

marriage, and teaches in Edmonton. They spent one year in Nigeria, teaching and supervising. They have three children.

Roger - was six upon arriving in Wanham. He got his grade 12 in Edmonton, and worked for a custom broker, and is now part owner and Vice-President of Alwood Custom Brokers. He married Janet Sanoto, and they have three children.

Harvey - was five and started school in Wanham. After grade 12, he enlisted in the Airforce and saw the world. He is an electrician, and spent 5 years in Europe. He married Marlene Hewitt and they have three children. Harvey retired from the Airforce after 21 years, and is an electrician for Dresser Ltd. Oilfield Service in Edmonton.

David - who was two on arrival in Wanham, finished grade 12 in Edmonton and spent one year in Cassian Mines. He got his degree in Calgary, and is teaching and lives in Wetaskiwin. He married Lois Burton (Shaw). They have one child.

Sharon - finished grade twelve in Edmonton. She specialized in typing and started working for the Journal. She married Ken Shaw, and moved to Winnipeg. She has been working for the Manitoba Government ever since. She is now secretary to John Rimer, Director of Safety and Health Branch for the Province of Manitoba. She was divorced six years ago.

At this writing, Mr. Russell and I are 74 years of age. After we left Wanham, Ben was principal for 4 years at Spirit River. We moved to Edmonton where he finished his teaching career, teaching there for 12 years. He taught for 46 years, all told.

His health deteriorated, and he suffered heart arrest and stroke. However he managed to keep going, and retired some 9 years ago. We get a nice cheque every month and own our own home, so have bread in the pantry, and money in the bank.

The three poplar trees that stand just south of the old teacherage's west porch, were taken from Mr. Skirzyk's pasture by Harvey, Roger and David, and planted with Mother's help. They stand tall today, and duly named R., H., and D.

THE RUTLEDGE FAMILY

by Ethel Rutledge

The Rutledge family came from Lauder, Manitoba to Spirit River in the fall of 1926. In the spring of 1927, they bought land at Wembley. Edwin and Jim did the farm work, while their dad ran the Massey-Harris business in town.

In the summer of 1928, Edwin went to Lauder to bring his new bride to Wembley.

In 1929 they homesteaded the land where the Heitrich family are now. There is a creek running through that land and it is still called Rutledge Creek.

Near the end of 1929, their son David was born. Two years later their daughter Evelyn was born. By this time Clara's health was not very well. So they sold the farm and moved to New Westminster, B.C. There Edwin worked many years as a long-shoreman. He died February, 1969, at the age of 68. His wife Clara, David and Evelyn still live in New Westminster.



Heart Valley Homestead - 1931. Left to Right: Jim, Ethel, Mrs. Lock, Clara and baby, David, and Edwin.

RUTLEDGE FAMILY

by Jean Pilch

Robert James (Jim) and Ethel Annie Rutledge first saw Wanham on their honeymoon on January 2, 1930. Coming by train from Beaverlodge, they visited Mrs. Ed. Harrington (Mildred) with whom Ethel had played basketball in Grande Prairie. Mrs. Harrington ran a general store in Wanham at the time. The couple then traveled by team through a "tunnel of trees" to Edwin Rutledge's homestead in the Heart Valley District.

Twenty years later, in the fall of 1950, the Jim Rutledge family and Norman (Chas) Tiernan moved from Salmon Arm, B.C., to buy the Nelitz farm 1 1/2 miles west of Wanham. Jim and Ethel were delighted to be back in the Peace River country, even though the first years were not without setbacks. Stooks from one of their



The Jim Rutledge Family - 1950. Back Row, Left to Right: Jim, Ethel and Ruby. Front Row: Viola, Jean and Gladys.

first crops froze into the mud in the field behind the barn. Another spring, Viola cut bundle bands while Leal Fowler and Jim fed stooks into a combine borrowed from Stepanuiks. The community spirit of cooperation culminated in threshing crews which included Jim and Chas, Stanley Stepanuik, Leal and Lloyd Fowler, John Putio, Jim Sawyer and other neighbours. John Dragometz and Bill Dredger often helped with stooking on the Rutledge farm.

In the mid 1950's, Jim Rutledge traveled around the

district with a veterinarian giving Bang's disease prevention shots to heifers.

The Rutledge family was always interested in sports. Jim helped Edwin Sather coach the men's ball teams. Ruby and Gladys were also avid softball players. In the summer of 1951, Ruby's team competed at a sports day in Spirit River, which ended in a spectacular rain storm. With construction on the road between Rycroft and Wanham, the entire Wanham ball club was stranded overnight in the lobby of the Rycroft Hotel. Ruby got home just as her parents were doing chores the next morning.

Another memorable softball tournament took place in Volin in 1961. An impromptu team of Wanham girls including Gladys and Jean Rutledge, Betty Wells, Ellen Bennett, Barbara and Jean Connell, and Pat Fowler entered and won the ladies' competition, much to everyone's surprise!

All four Rutledge girls, Ruby, Viola, Gladys and Jean attended Wanham School and also worked in Fimrite's Department Store either during or after high school.

Ruby was in the first graduating class from Wanham School in 1952. The other three graduates were Vern Lampert, Wilma Bush, and Ramona Russell. The school principal was Mr. Russell. Ruby went on to nurses' training at the General Hospital in Edmonton.

Viola won the Governor-General's Medal in 1955 for the highest grade nine marks in the Spirit River School Division. In 1958, she won the Fimrite Award given for the highest marks of a graduate going on to teacher's training at the University of Alberta.

Gladys participated in all school team sports, especially softball, basketball and volleyball. She completed secretarial training at St. Joseph's Business College in Grande Prairie in 1963.

Jean was active in school councils, debating teams, and school paper and yearbook committees. When she graduated in 1963, she won six scholastic awards given by the Spirit River School Division. Jean obtained her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Alberta in 1967.

Jim and Ethel Rutledge sold their farm to Taras Putio in September 1965 due to health problems. Jim passed away on January 11, 1974.

Ethel still keeps her own house in Grande Prairie but



Jim and Ethel Rutledge - 25th Anniversary.

you almost need an appointment to find her at home! Mark and RUBY Meunier live in Red Deer. Their children are Jim, Mark, and Marie Louise.

Orville and VIOLA Hingley farm at Bonanza and have four children: Trent, Sylvia, Carol and Leroy.

Neil and GLADYS Morrison reside in Prince George with their children Brenda and Dean.

Peter and JEAN Pilch and their children Stephen and Carla live in Calgary.

J.S. (JIM) RUTHERFORD

I landed in the Peace River area on October 28, 1931; together with my parents, sister and two brothers (an older sister elected to stay in central Alberta). We arrived in Rycroft from the Prairie region of Alberta, just nine miles inside the Alberta - Saskatchewan border. Since this area was very dry, and therefore feed (hay and grain) for the horses (the main work force in the fields) were in short supply, the Alberta Government allotted two railway box cars for settlers effects per farmer for those who wished to move to a district where there was an ample supply of feed.

The first years were endured under extreme hardship, as there were very few opportunities to earn money, harvest time not being much better, as I remember the fall of 1932 I worked with a threshing crew, and I received \$2.50 per day.

Farming with horses, (as we did in the early thirties) was, to say the least, quite different from the way it is done today. The pace was very leisure like or so it seemed, as there was more time to visit with neighbors than what there is now.

The crops were very good, but prices were poor to say the least; No. 1 hard wheat sold in the elevator for as low as .21¢ per bushel, and oats sold for about a nickel. No one in our area raised any barley in the early thirties. In 1935 we traded Two six month old calves for a 10 - 20 TITAN tractor, with which we did a fair amount of breaking, both for customers and at home, at a speed of about two and one half miles per hour. Then in 1937 we bought a threshing machine, which was manufactured in



Building an addition to the Wanham School (presently Exhibit Building at the sportsground). Left to Right: Stan Sawers, Jim Rutherford, Gus Dopfer, Erling Borseeth, and George Bolduc.

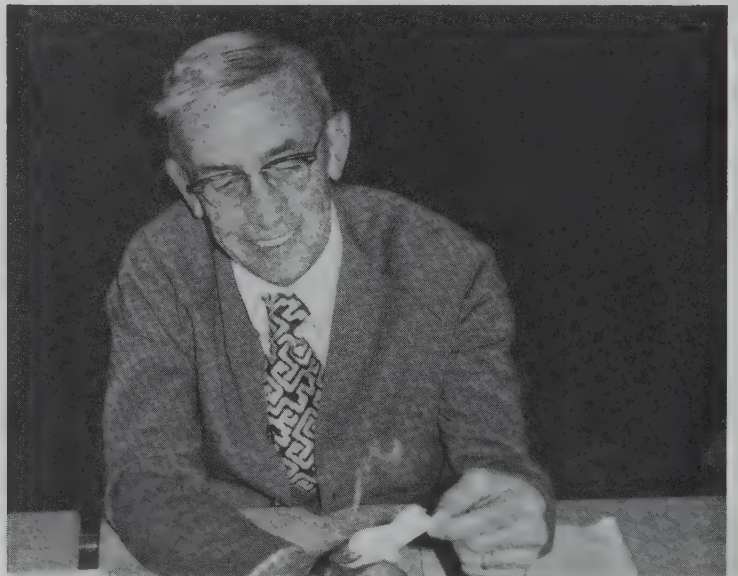


Farewell party for Clara Hauser. Back Row, Left to Right: Jim Rutherford, E.J. Harrington, George MacDonald, Lusco Christensen, Bill Trumpower. Middle Row: Nellie Trumpower, Olive MacDonald, Lizzie Hauser. Front Row: Esther Christensen, Mae Rutherford, Helen Harrington, Clara Hauser.

Quebec, and was called the Call of the West. It was a hand feed effort, no tally but it did have a blower, about nine bushels was a fair days work.

The social life in the thirties was quite active, especially during the winter months there would be dances in the several one room schools; ladies would bring lunch, and someone would pass a hat around for a silver collection, this was the pay the orchestra received.

The 1940's saw a change from the little one room school to the consolidated central school. In 1945 I drove the first school bus into Wanham, A 1928 one ton truck with a cover or roof over the box, there was NO heat in either the truck cab or the van. Also there was no way to supervise the passengers, (to the delight of the children and the vexation of the driver). My school bus run was



Jim Rutherford, president of COCO, burning the mortgage on the Hall - 1974.

from the Wanham school east for seven miles and return, there was NO gravel on the road nor was any snowplowing done during the winter, but very few days were missed due to adverse road conditions. I retired from school bus driving in 1971. During the winter of 45 - 46 we played badminton quite extensively, and a few times fifteen to twenty Wanham residents would pile into my school bus, and go to Rycroft or Spirit River on a Sunday afternoon for a tournament, I don't recall the

outcome of any of these tournaments, but I do know we had fun.



Left to Right: Brenda Skirzyk, Miles Schenk, Larry Kozubak, Peter Leriger, Darlene Skirzyk - 1957.



Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Metz.



Mr. and Mrs. Con Toepfner - 1958.



Left to Right: Ida Tansem, Mary Sather, Mrs. Blonski at Wanham Curling Rink Booth.



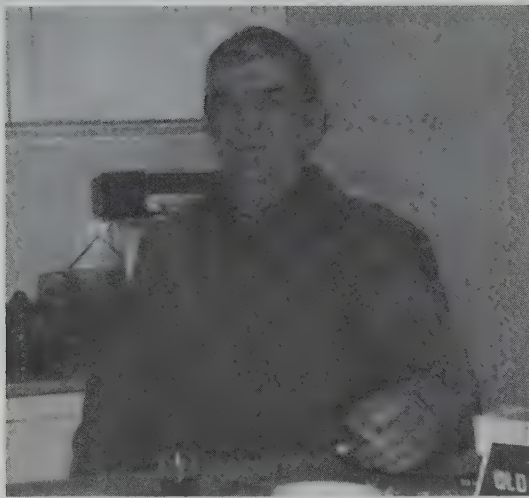
Pete Simonson and family - 1948.



Mrs. John Richter and Mary in the hotel kitchen.



Left to Right: Don Woolard, Zoe Russell, Howard Zmean, Buddy Johnson, Ramona Russell, Phyllis Sather.



Mr. Wasyl Putio



The Murray Family - 1980. Back Row, Left to Right: Willard, Pete, Sylvia, Ervin. Front Row: Ernie, Carol, Wilma, Grace, David.



Pete Anderson



Rita Rogers



Mike Shannon



Stanley and Edith Karpinski.



The Nelitz Family. Left to Right: Ernest, Lily, Wally, Carl, Mrs. Nelitz, Edgar, George.



"Salty" Ungstad and Bud Rutherford.



Mr. and Mrs. Posty.



Bill and Pearl Sallis.

SALLIS FAMILY

by Bill Sallis

Both Pearl and I were born and raised at a place called Dalroy in Southern Alberta - better described as a wide place in the road or a long line of box cars.

We were married in 1941, and I immediately went overseas arriving home in 1945.

Gary was born in 1946, or nine months and fifteen minutes after I got home.

We took over the Pool Elevator in Dalroy for a time, before hearing of the Lassiter Project and the land that was available for veterans.

Ted was born in 1947.

We arrived in Belloy along with the Bothams on May 1, 1950. On the same train were Bill Morrell, Irvine Madsen, Stan DeMay and Frank Koosey. We all settled in the same area - northeast of Belloy and shared many happy years as neighbors.

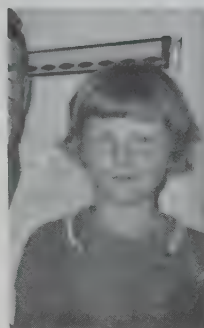
As I had kept my job with the Pool, Bothams had put in the crop that spring, and then Pearl and I went to Hines Creek. We stayed there for a year only, government policy being that homesteaders must stay on their land for six months of each year, even if it meant starving to death. Anyway, I quit the Pool, moved back to the homestead and went to work for the U.G.G. in Belloy, until the same policy forced us to take up full time farming in 1954.



Triplets?? No - Twins Buzz and Ben Sallis with cousin Naida Botham in the middle.

The twins, Ward and Garth (Buzz and Ben) were born that year - which was no great thing as everybody was having babies at that time. All seven women living in our area were pregnant that year. Irvend Madsen, being the only batchelor, became a target for much kidding over this.

Anyway, Pearl came up with the twins, which made us very proud even if after ordering a girl we ended up with two boys. We finally got our girl, Cindy, in 1959, which completed our family.



Ted and Gary holding Ben and Buzz. Inset: Cindy.

We spent many happy years in the Belloy/Wanham area.

Gary married Bernadett Shea and they are making their home in Manning. They have two girls. Ted married Sylvia Rycroft and they live on the farm and have two girls. Benny married Grace Murray and they live on the farm along with two boys and one girl. Cindy is living in Grande Prairie where she works for A.G.T. Buzz is still single and works in Grande Prairie and on the farm.

Pearl passed away in 1977. Buzz and I live in Wanham, and I spend my time holidaying and helping the boys on the farm.



The Sallis Family. Left to Right: Gary, Ward (Buzz), Ted, Cindy, Bill, Pearl, Garth (Ben).

MR. TONY SALUGA

Mr. Tony Saluga was born in Poland in the year of 1883. He passed away in Wanham at the age of 83.

Mr. Saluga's body was found in his cabin on Thursday, August 14, 1969. Death had occurred some time prior to this date so the actual time of his death will never be known.

It is known that Mr. Saluga arrived in Alberta before 1913 but no one seems to know just at what time he arrived in Wanham.

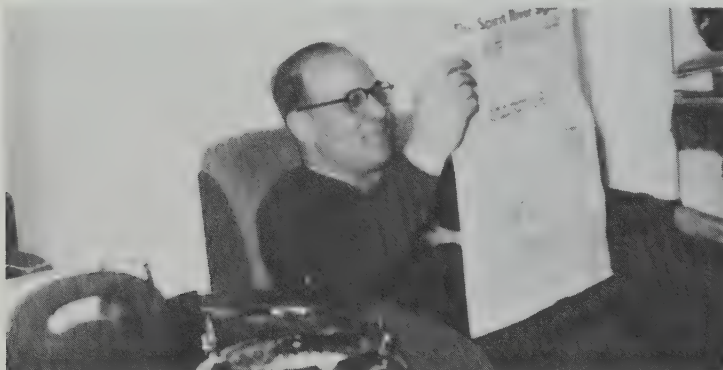
His funeral service was held in the Wanham Cemetery at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 16. Officiating at the graveside was Mr. Robert Copenhaver.

ALEX SANDERCOCK MR. JOHN DEERE

by Wallace Tansem

The posters had been out now for at least three weeks and everyone who was anyone had received their free tickets in the mail. It meant that "John Deere Day" was coming once again. This "Day" had become a part of rural life and farmers especially mark it on their calendar as a day in town. And what a day it was.

It began always at two in the afternoon with a free comic, or Walt Disney movie. There were door prizes for the man of the house and also for mama. Coffee and donuts. Interspersed in the movie were the John Deere advertising for the new machinery. Alex Sandercock was the John Deere dealer and this was his day. Alex loved the old two-cylinder John Deere tractors with a passion. Look at the size of the piston he would say. "Why, there is no way you can compare the brute power that comes out of that baby. And think of repairs if you ever have to repair her. Only half the parts. Only two cylinders, four valves, two sets of rings. Come on in the back I want to show you one Mac has stripped down. Nothing wrong with her just a check-up." And so you went in the back to see the green and yellow monster with her innards laying all over the floor. And Alex would point out the size of the gears and axels. Twice as big as anything the opposition makes. And most times there was one popping away out behind the garage and so out you went to listen. And it was a sound that grew on you. In Alex most productive salesman years the chugg chugg sound of his tractors filled the valley. I guess the day that Alex converted and sold Hans Mortenson a John Deere A-R in



"Mr. John Deere" catching up on the local news.

place of Hans "power to the glory Case" was the pinnacle. But times were changing.

The posters came out telling of "the new generation of power". It was the year that John Deere of necessity converted to the six-cylinder tractor. The free movie was there, the coffee and donuts, the door prizes but now there were the salesmen expounding on the merits of these new beauties, and time had passed Alex by. The selling pitch that Alex used was gone. These tractors were now the same as the oppositions. Soon John Deere was to centralize their parts and sales offices to the larger centers and the day of the small-town implement dealer were gone.



Alex Sandercock beside one of the newer John Deere models.

Alex (Mr. John Deere) came to Wanham in the mid-thirties. He began as a barber and later purchased the P. Tansem grocery and hardware store. He married Vera Tansem and together they ran the business. A fire destroyed the stores. Alex rebuilt and later sold to A.O. Fimrite. He had been selling John Deere equipment in a small way while he operated the store but following the sale of the store he began selling John Deere as a full time occupation. He carried one of the largest stocks of parts in the area.



Jessie Sandercock

EDWIN AND GRACE SATHER

by Edwin Sather

Previous to coming to the Peace country, my father Edward and brother, Emil, and myself had farmed near Blackfalds in Central Alberta. Emil's neighbor, W. Rottacker told him about the rich farmland in Peoria, south of Wanham, which was open for homesteading. Consequently they took the train for Wanham in February, 1927 and filed on homesteads for themselves. Emil filed by proxy for Dad and myself, which would hold this land for us for a short period of time. We came up in the summer of 1927, to verify our claim. Emil's - SW 1/4 34-76-; Edwin's NW 35-76; and Edward's NE 1/4 34-76.

That summer Emil brought a box car of settler's effects which included six head of horses, oats for the horses, a breaking plow, haying equipment and other farm machinery, two wagons, wagon box, bundle rack, a dismantled granary that was to be used for temporary living quarters and a minimum of furniture. The three of us accompanied the box car.



Edward and Hansine Sather with great-granddaughter, Roxanne Lamothe.

MUD AND MOSQUITOES

Upon arriving at Wanham, we unloaded the car. After assembling the wagon and hay rack we took part of the load and with six horses and harness, headed for the homestead. The trail south was rough, winding and very wet in places. Halfway through the bush, we were stuck in a mud hole. The horses fell down so we had to unhook them, get them up and unload about half the load which we carried to drier land, and proceeded on with the remainder.

We set the granary up on Emil's land. Eventually we were able to move the rest of the contents of the car, after the roads dried.

Peter Myrland arrived later. On his way out to the homestead, the team of horses tied to the wagon came loose and wandered away and were not found all summer. They came out of the bush in the fall, with only the collars left of their harness.

During the summer we were able to clear and break forty acres by axe and horse power. We worked long hours, combatting mosquitoes day and night. Smudges were lit to protect the horses. We had to sew mosquito netting to our caps for our protection. A barn was built,

with a frame of rails and rough lumber. We also put up hay. There were patches of burnt-over land that had grown up to wild hay, peavine, and vetch. After clearing off the burnt willows, we cut and put up the hay for winter. Later this land was broken.

We returned to Blackfalds for harvest. Emil and family moved to the Peace that fall. I came up in the winter of 1928-29 to get out logs, which were taken to Reiswig's mill for lumber. There was no sleighing that winter, so all the hauling was done by wagon. We also cut rails for fenceposts.

In the summer of 1929, Dad and I returned to the Peace and with Emil's help, built a storey and a half house on my homestead. We did more clearing and breaking that summer. Our one outing was attending a sport's day in Peoria, where I played ball.

After harvesting our crop at Blackfalds, we pulled up stakes and left for the Peace, arriving in October. Dad and Elmer came with the box car, while I drove the family up in a Whippet car. We came by way of Athabasca, over dirt roads that led us through trails and even pastures. We crossed the river at Smith by ferry. The next day we travelled on to Peace River, crossing the river by ferry at Dunvegan. We arrived at Pete Myrland's homestead about eight p.m. on the second day.



1930 Hart Parr tractor owned by Edwin Sather.

We then moved into my house on the homestead. During the next two years we cleared and broke more land. Dad, Emil and I purchased a steel-wheeled Hart Parr in 1931, which we used for breaking and running a 28" threshing machine owned by Hans Mortenson. Later we purchased one of our own. Dad's house was built in 1932, with the help of Gus Dopher.

I was married on December 26, 1932 to Grace Farewell, formerly of Blackfalds, who had taught in the Mersey School in Peoria the previous year. My sister, Vera married John Wendland, so we had a double wedding at the home of my parents. We were married by Pastor Rick of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, who was the only available minister at that time. Previous to our marriage, a bunch from Peoria gave us a kitchen shower at the home of my parents. A few days after we were married they gave us a schiveree, banging on kettles etc. until we opened the door and let them in. Mr. and Mrs. Pete Myrland, Emma and Ella, Sverre and Erling Borseth, Emil, Mary and sons, (Stanley, Harold and

Alan,) Mother and Dad, Elmer and Ida attended our wedding. A full course supper, turkey and all the trimmings was served, followed by dancing.

Times were hard. Grace received a fine horse and an 800 lb. steer as part payment for her salary of \$900.00 per year. There was a local school board, of which Mr. O.L. Toftner was chairman. They collected the local taxes and paid the teacher's salary and the upkeep of the school. That year there were grades one to nine, with over thirty pupils.

The price of wheat was .25¢ per bushel; hogs ready for market were \$2.00 each and \$12.00 for an 800 lb. steer. But in spite of a lack of cash we never lacked for food or shelter during those depression years. We had plenty of moose and deer meat; our own pork, which we cured; chickens, eggs, milk, cream, butter and a good garden. We canned quarts of raspberries and saskatoons, as well as vegetables and meat. In those days, I never came home without a moose or deer after a days hunting. Then came the big job of butchering and cutting up the meat. We ground a lot of the meat, which was mixed with pork if we had just butchered. We would boil the bones to make broth to cover the meat balls ready for canning. The rest of the meat was cut up and canned in its own juice. If the weather was cold, we froze some to be used as roasts. We made butter, which we traded for groceries, but also sold cream later, for as low as 12¢ lb - butterfat. Butter was worth 25¢ lb.

Our kitchen range was equipped with a warming oven on top, and a reservoir on the side, which kept hot water always available. In the winter we kept a barrel beside the stove in which to melt snow. The evening before wash day a boiler was set on the stove to melt enough snow to provide soft water for washing clothes. At first we used a big wash tub and scrub board for washing, with a hand wringer attached. No commercial bleach was used but the white clothes were washed, then boiled in water in the boiler, then rinsed. We never had to worry that the air was too dry! In the winter the colored clothes were hung on lines upstairs and the rest were hung on the clothesline outside, to be brought in a few days later, stiff as boards. They then took their turn in the upstairs 'drier.' We were later able to buy a handwasher, with a built-in scrub board. This proved a great blessing to a fast-growing family. During the summer the washing was done outdoors.

In the summer, we cut hay on wild land and hauled it home, where it was stacked. During the summer, water was scarce for livestock and household use, after the creek dried up and the shallow dam went dry. I hauled water by the barrel from West Vale from Tracey's well, which was dug in a spring. Sometimes I hauled water for the house from the Belloy springs. During the winter we used snow for all our needs. We also put up ice during the winter, which was stored in an insulated ice house. This served to cool the drinking water and keep the milk and cream sweet during the summer.

There were always logs to get out for a years supply of wood, half to be split for use in the range and the rest left in blocks for the air tight heater. Dad, Emil and I purchased a wood-sawing outfit which sawed our own wood, as well as some for the neighbors. I would have to get up

several times during the night to fire up, to keep the house warm. We had more snow and steady cold during those years.

There were many chores to do in the summer, as well as winter. Up at five a.m. during spring, summer and fall, I'd feed and harness four or five head of horses, milk and feed several cows, and separate the milk before breakfast. We had a Viking cream separator. After breakfast, the calves, chickens and pigs were fed; then off to the field by eight a.m. There was more land to clear, as well as fencing and haying. Emil, Dad and I bought the S.E. 1/4 4-77 from Delmer Reiswig and were able to cut wild hay on that land, as well as on our own cleared land.

We didn't have much time for recreation, but we always attended the F.U.A. picnic which was held first in West Vale, and then in the hall by the Kadot, which was known as Central Hall. There were always ball games, races and a chance to visit your neighbors. The highlight, of course, was the big picnic dinner.

Lutheran church services were held in the homes at first, but later in the hall. Reverend Nordmark, from Sexsmith, was our pastor.



Edwin holding Barbara, Grace holding Joan, Phyllis seated and Emil Sather standing.

Our family grew rapidly. Phyllis, born in 1933, married Henry Hessler from Northmark; Barbara, born in 1935, died in 1944; Joan, born in 1936, married Allan Scott from Belloy; Lorraine, born in 1939, married Greg Lamothe from McLennan; Dennis, born in 1941, married Allison Mayers from Holmfield, Manitoba; David, born in 1944, died as a result of a fire. Michael, born in 1948, is unmarried.

We were served by a district nurse for many years, but all of our children were born in the hospital in Grande Prairie. There were women in Grande Prairie who boarded pregnant women, awaiting the birth of their children, which could be from a few days to a week or more, if it was winter time. The one lady who comes to mind is the late Mrs. Percy. Two fine doctors in those early days were Dr. O'Brien and Dr. Carlisle.

Our eldest daughter, Phyllis attended Seventh Day Adventist School for two years and her sister, Barbara for one year. The new Mersey School was built on the quarter section we had purchased from Delmer Reiswig. Here it remained until 1954, until it was moved into

Wanham to become part of the new centralized school.

In 1935, Grace and our two oldest children went by train to Blackfalds, Alberta for a visit, and were unable to return for six weeks because the NAR bridge was washed out at Watino, and the railroad was under water. In spite of the heavy rainfall, I was able to clear and break fifteen acres of land that summer. Mr. Hugh Fraser, road foreman helped me. He homesteaded the quarter that was later purchased by Harold Bennett, now farmed by his son, Fred.

Other neighbors were Philip Seibel, just south of us, Bert Moss, a bachelor, and a good neighbor, across the road to the north. This land is now owned by Henry Wunch. The quarter east of us was homesteaded and is still owned by Art Davis. My father, Edward Sather, homesteaded on the quarter west of us. The Sathers rented land owned by Ole Maring, a bachelor whose homestead bordered the Bennett place.

HARVEST TIME

By 1936, with more land under cultivation, I was able to hire a man for stooking. One of the best men I ever had was Lloyd De Winter from Enilda. Lloyd proved to be a very reliable and pleasant man to have around.

The grain was cut by a binder pulled by four horses. The binder cut, then tied the grain into bundles. These bundles were set up into stooks, made of eight to ten bundles. If the weather was favorable, threshing could commence after two weeks. A threshing outfit would consist of ten men. Eight men with teams and bundle racks would haul in the bundles from the field and bring their loads up to the feeder of the separator and pitch the bundles off. It would take two men to run the outfit. The separator man would look after the threshing machine, the other man would maintain the tractor, and move the outfit from one field to another. They had to oversee the filling of the granaries. Then they 'spike-pitched' - i.e.



First Holstein heifer calf owned by Edwin Sather.

helped the bundle haulers who came in pairs to unload, one on either side of the separator.

I was interested in raising cattle. I purchased two Holstein heifers from Hosford Farms in Edmonton, and started to keep R.O.P. (record of performance) They proved to be excellent producers, 14,000 lbs. of milk

from one lactation. Subsequent offspring proved equally fine. This was the nucleus of our herd in Wanham, where we ran a dairy that supplied the village of Wanham with milk.

During this time, one of these heifers came down with milk fever after calving. Having never seen this happen before, I called in the vet. By the time he came she seemed nearly dead. He injected her with calcium, and in a matter of minutes, she was up on her feet and chewing her cud. The vet showed me how to make an injection, and advised me to keep a little calcium on hand. As a result, I was able to treat the neighbor's cows, as well as our own.

BARBARA

Our family circle was broken in March, 1944. Our daughter, Barbara, died as a result of red measles. We called in the district nurse, Norma Shearer and she did what she could. Dr. Law of Spirit River was away, but the nurse stayed with us overnight, and accompanied us to Grande prairie the next day. As we had no car at that time, our good friend and neighbor, Bill Rottacker, drove us up. It was a bitterly cold day. I remember how we had to use blankets and warmed bricks to keep warm. We reached Dr. Carlisle's office, and after examining Barbara, he phoned the hospital to get her admitted, but had great difficulty persuading the hospital to let us bring her in. After we reached the hospital, the doctor and nurses did all they could to save her life, but to no avail. She was nine years old, and a child who was beloved by all who knew her.

THE ELMER SATHER STORY

Elmer Sather and I (Lily Olsen) were married on February 28, 1941, at the Presbyterian Church in Wanham.

Our first home was on the Didow place, N.W. 3-77-3-6. It was a rented quarter, and the land belonged to John Didow, a section foreman, who at that time was stationed in Eaglesham.

The Didows were good landlords, and would upon occasion come to spend a few hours with us. One of those visits occurred on a Sunday afternoon, during the first year of our marriage.

- NICE FLOWER -

That spring I had started my first flower bed and had worked diligently in it, but because of the lack of rain and the dry sandy soil in the plot, I didn't have much luck. One flower, however, seemed to flourish in spite of everything, so I proudly took Mrs. Didow out to see it. "That?" she exclaimed, when I pointed it out to her. "Why, that's a stinkweed!"

Imagine my mortification!

During our first winter, we had no mode of transport of our own, but acquired the use of a borrowed team of horses in exchange for their feed and care. The next

spring we bought a brand new bicycle with white walled tires. We were very proud of it and used it a lot, with Elmer pedalling and me sitting on the handle bars!

Our first motorized vehicle was a second hand, one-ton Model-A Ford truck that we purchased from Alf and Leila Tracy. It was a reasonably good truck, and we got through a lot of mud and snow with it. But somehow the snow got just too deep, and we had to use the horses to pull it down to the main road.

CARS

Cars in the early days had no self-starters, but usually got going after a few revolutions of the crank. There were no heaters either, but somehow they weren't missed, because we had never had them. We simply dressed for the occasion and were thankful that we were protected from the wind, snow and rain.

Gas was brought to the engine via a vacuum tank. This worked o.k. as long as there was no leakage in the system, but if there was, it could cause a whole lot of trouble.

Batteries were usually taken into the house after each winter trip. Oil was often drained, and warmed up again before it was returned to the car, just prior to the next outing.

I remember that Elmer often used another method. He would start a fire in a can of kindling and gasoline, and slip this under the oilpan. In about half an hour the oil had heated and was free flowing. A dangerous method, to be sure, but somehow we never had any mishaps.

There was no anti-freeze, so in the winter, water always had to be drained from the radiator after each trip. Then when the car was in use and parked, the motor had to be started up and run quite frequently. Elmer used to pile old coats and blankets over the hood to help keep in the heat.

Sometimes coal oil or diesel fuel served as anti-freeze, but both were hard on the connecting hoses that ran from the block to the radiator, so weren't too satisfactory.

There were no windshield wipers, and since there were no heaters, when the inside of the windshield frosted over, both driver and passengers were obliged to scrape off a section of the glass to obtain *some* visibility. In the snow storms or in rainy, muddy weather, the outside of the windshield often covered over completely, and the

only way for the driver to see was to open the side window and stick his head out. This Elmer did, a good many times.

Our first child, Fay, was born on February 25th, 1943, during the four and one half years we lived on Didows. Then, when Elmer's parents, the Edward Sathers, who lived on the N.E. 34-76-3-6, built a house below the 'Nurses Hill,' in Wanham and moved there, we purchased their land and moved on to it. On April 22, 1946, our eldest son, Dale, was born.

Snow plows were in the experimental stage about then and weren't too adequate, but a community snow machine was obtained for Peoria, West Vale, and Heart Valley, with different residents having shares in it. One tractor was attached to the power takeoff and one pushed from behind. Gordon Edey and Bill Mitchell were the drivers. They succeeded in clearing some roads, but never could get around to the whole area before the roads first plowed were filled in again. The effort was soon discontinued.

In the winter of 1946, we had brush cutters at our place. Then for awhile the road from our yard to the Central Hall corner was kept open by the bull dozer, but they only cleared a path in the middle, and the snow was piled very deep on each side. The brush cutters soon moved on, and the tunnel they had cleared filled in to the brim with drifted, hard packed snow.

I remember that to attend the Frieda Wegh - Ben Hauser wedding about that time, our mode of travel was one horse hooked to a stone-boat. The horse was able to walk on the hard-packed edge of the snow ridge piled up by the brush-cutters. From the corner, we caught a ride into Wanham.

REFRIGERATION

Since there were no deep freezes or refrigerators, we had to devise some cooling systems. In winter of course, this was no problem. Meat was frozen, and kept that way for months, by burying it in grain. In summer, however, it was quite a different matter. To keep perishables even reasonably well, we had to take them immediately after use to our cellar under the house, or place them in a narrow, screened box that was nailed to the wall outside of a north window. This was easily accessible from the kitchen, by simply opening the window and sliding food out into the box.

We put cream for shipping or churning in lidded pails and hung them in seepage wells just above water level. This worked quite well, but if the rope attached to the pails slipped, or the pails accidentally tipped a little, cream would spill out and spoil the water. This happened also when we hung the pail too close to the water's surface, and the level rose unexpectedly overnight, or following a rain storm.

An ice-house proved a boon. It was built out of logs and lumber, and was filled during the winter with huge ice blocks, sawed from frozen over dams, or even from Kadot Lake. The blocks were pretty unwieldy - perhaps two feet wide by two feet long and up to fifteen inches thick, so were hard to handle. Under, over, and all



Faye helping carry wood.

around the ice, sawdust was poured until all was thoroughly covered. A small box about two and a half feet wide by two and a half feet long, and three feet high was set a short distance back from the main door of the ice-house. Then, leading to the outer door, was a short, low passageway that provided additional insulation. When the ice and sawdust was packed thoroughly all around the three sides and over the top, it provided quite acceptable refrigeration. But imagine, if you will, walking a hundred feet or so, to and from the ice-house each time you wanted something kept cool!



*Left to Right:
Chris, Wayne
and Dale ready
for school.*



*Wayne and Chris with
their Dad's motor-
cycle.*

Ice usually lasted well into the summer though, and occasionally we even dug out a block, smashed it up in a gunny sack, for freezing homemade ice cream.

On September 21st, 1951, our second son, Wayne was born, and on September 5th, 1954, our fourth child, Chris, completed our family.

Fay married Ralph Sorgen of Wanham. They live in Grande Prairie and have three children - Melanie, Cindy and Derry.

Dale married Hedda Averages from Beaverlodge. They have two children - Corilee and Lisa and they live on an acreage southeast of Dawson Creek. Dale is with the Health of Animals Branch of the Department of Agriculture.

Wayne married Naida Botham from Belloy. They have two children - Dalyce and Skye, and have taken over our farm and live in the house there.



Elmer and Lily Sather celebrating their 25th Wedding Anniversary in their home on the farm.

Chris married Irene Semeniuk from Codesa. They live in Grande Prairie and have three children - Trevor, Angela and Kyla. Chris and Ralph are partners in Viking Construction, a carpentry firm in Grande Prairie.

Elmer and I retired from farming and moved into Grande Prairie in November, 1977. We like it here, but part of our hearts will always be around the Wanham area, where we spent so many happy years.

SATHER, EMIL

by Mary Sather

Emil Sather was born in Kristiansand, Norway on May 10, 1901. When he was twelve years old, he and his mother, one brother and two sisters emigrated to Eugene, Oregon, to join the father, Edward Sather who had gone three years earlier to make a new home for his family. In 1917, the family (with the addition of another sister and brother) moved to Burdette, Alberta. It was extremely dry for years in Southern Alberta, so they moved to Blackfalds, Alberta, in 1920 where Emil met and married me, Mary Farewell, (eldest daughter of a pioneer homesteader in that area.) on December 9, 1925.

In February of 1927, Emil and his uncle, Peter Myrland went to the Peace River country to look for homesteads south of the hamlet of Wanham. They filed on land about eight miles south in the Advent settlement of Peoria, and Emil also filed on land for his father and brother Edwin. Later two cousins, Erling and Sverre Borseth, filed on homesteads close by. In June of 1927 Emil, his father, brother Edwin, and uncle Peter went to their homesteads and brushed land and did some breaking, etc. The location of the homestead was S.W. 34-76-3-W6.

That fall of 1927, Emil and his uncle moved their livestock, machinery etc. in box cars, to the homesteads. The men built small houses for their families, so we went on December 9th, 1927 to our new home, travelling with many new settlers on the swaying, jolting E.D. and B.C. train. I had our 14 month old son, Stanley, for company.

There were many years of hard work before the

homesteads were finally cleared for good farming. Emil's parents came to their land on October 25th, 1929, and soon built a house for their family of two daughters and one son, Elmer. Emil's brother, Edwin, moved to his homestead earlier and built his house. There was a good saw mill in Peoria at the Advent settlement east of us where the men were able to get lumber sawed from timber hauled from the Birch Hills.

NEIGHBORS

During those hard years on the homestead, due to the severe depression of the thirties, all the neighbors worked together to help build a school in West Vale, two and one half miles west of our homestead, and later a public hall for the community was built a mile and a half south of our land.

Very soon after we arrived there were many neighbors, the Marius Olsens, many bachelors, the Wellmans, Weghs, Franzes, Funks, Bohnkes and many others. To the south, across the Kadot Creek, was the Heart Valley district in which many veterans had taken land earlier. We had many fine neighbors in all areas around.



Emil and children on the Hart Parr tractor - 1931.

The first years the roads were very bad, and I recall one spring day when Emma Myrland and I drove the wagon to Wanham and one of the horses slipped down in the mud. We had to walk half a mile to get a man to bring his team and help us. We had no more serious trouble.



The Emil Sather family - 1939. Left to Right: Emil, Mary holding Anne, Stan, Alan, Harold and Sam.

In the winter the grain was hauled with sleighs to Wanham. It was a long, cold days work for the men, driving their teams and doing their chores with all the animals as well.

By the year 1943, we had six sons and one daughter. In those early years roads were terrible and school was only held for pupils up to grade eight. We had to send one son to Wanham to get his grade nine. It was due to the school problem and our desire to be where we'd be able to go to the church of our choice, that in 1944 we bought a quarter of land, the S.E. 1/4 78-3-W6, actually the land



Harold, Buddy and Anne with pet deer called "Deer, Deer" in front of 1937 Ford. Taken in 1943.

where the school was situated, and it eventually became part of the village of Wanham. Emil's brother Edwin and family were co-owners, and on September 28th, 1944, we began to move into our new location. In January, 1962, a family co-operative farm was formed and continues successfully to the present time.

Following excerpts are from memories of our daughter, Ann, about her father:

ANN WRITES

It would not be possible to write an account of Emil Sather and his family without mentioning the kind of public spirited man my father was and his involvement in community life and Alberta as well. Like many people in the 1920's and early thirties, Emil Sather became involved with the movements of the times that arose out of the problems of the Prairie farmers. As a young man he certainly supported the U.F.A. movement with real interest. Then in the early thirties he accepted the vision of a better life for all farmers and working people in Canada which were extolled by J.S. Wordsworth, M.J. Coldwell and others, like William Irvine of Alberta Commitment to the C.C.F. movement, and later the N.D.P., was a driving force in his life which was never shaken despite the ups and downs and sometimes bitter opposition he encountered. As a result of this sincere interest in the brotherhood of man, he ran in three elections as a candidate for two provincial C.C.F. elections and one Federal election for the N.D.P. It was perhaps only fitting that he saw a life-long dream fulfilled in the election of an N.D.P. candidate, Grant Notley, to the Alberta legislature from his home constituency in



Emil Sather Family - 1973. Back Row, Left to Right: Jim, Raymond (Bud), Anne, Sam, Alan, Harold and Stan. Front Row: Emil and Mary.

1971, two and a half years before his death in October, 1973.

In addition to his political involvement, he served as a trustee and then Chairman of the Board of the Spirit River School Division. He also sat on the Wanham town council and the Grande Prairie Municipal Hospital Board.

An elder of the Presbyterian Church of Wanham, he was unfailing in his Christian beliefs and in his desire to keep the church going in the community. This deep personal commitment and the application of these principles in his daily life, as well as his vitality and untiring efforts as a farmer were a source of inspiration to his family and to those who learned to know the man behind the rather quiet, reserved image that presented itself to the public.

ROBERT KENNEDY SAWERS

Born in Kirkontiloch, Scotland in 1880, Robert was in the 42 Gordon Highlanders in World War I. During this time he was hospitalized in France, due to severe mustard gas inhalation which contributed to ill health in later years.

Anne Amy Sawers was born in London, England in July, 1898.

Robert and Anne came to Canada in 1925. They met in Calgary, Alberta where they were married and lived for three and a half years.

In 1928, they came to Clairmont, Alberta, where Robert started a barber shop. After living there for three months, they moved to Wanham. Over the next few years, times were tough. They operated a restaurant for a while, and Robert did various types of work including barbering, janitor work, and working on the roads to earn a living.

HEART OF THE SHAMROCK

Robert was very active in the area of drama, producing four or five plays, one of the more successful ones entitled, "The Heart of the Shamrock." As well, Robert provided many hours of entertainment, singing and playing the piano.

Over the years, Anne and Robert were blessed with three sons: Robert, Stanley and James and one daughter, Sheena.



Rob Sawers



Jim Sawers driving Leal Fowler's logging team.



Ramona Russell and Sheena Sawers.

Robert passed away in 1942, and Anne remained in Wanham until their children were grown and married. She then moved to Edmonton, where she still leads a very active life at the age of eighty-two. Her main hobby is travelling. She has been back to England; travelled in the United States to places such as Reno, Las Vegas, Disneyland, and attended the Rose Bowl Parade. She has also visited many places in Canada, Niagara Falls being a favorite.

Robert Jr. and his wife Margaret have one son, and live in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Stanley and his wife, Jessie have two daughters and live in Wanham, Alberta.

James and his wife, Ella May have a son and a daughter and live in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Sheena and her husband Robert Rumberger have four daughters, and live in Stettler, Alberta.

To date, Robert and Anne have nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

STORY OF GEORGE SAYLE WEST VALE

as told to Lily Sather

"Those were rough and trying times - I wouldn't want to wish them on anyone, but, I wouldn't have missed them for anything!" mused George Sayle when reminiscing about his homesteading experiences in West Vale.

"It was really a problem in those days to get even a dollar or so for some items of clothing. The only thing the homesteader could be sure of was that there would be plenty of moose meat and potatoes. There were lots of bears, of course, but these simply grunted and took off in the bush, when we met them."

George and Fred Birdsall arrived in West Vale in 1929. They lived with Paul Nagel there, while building homes of their own. Fred's house was built first and then the two men batched there together while logs were taken out for George's home, which was completed that fall. The two men combined their horses and machinery until each could manage to farm on their own. This proved a convenience for both of them.

CHURNING

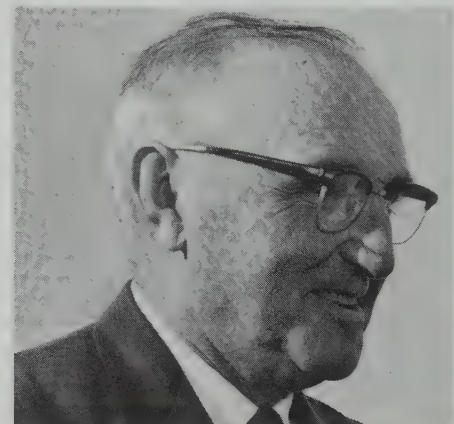
Recalling other events of the early years, George said he and Fred used a 20 pound syrup pail to churn their butter in. They would half fill the pail with cream, put on the lid and begin to shake it up and down, or back and forth, until it solidified and thumped, at which time they knew the cream had turned to butter. Because gas would form in the tight container, the lid had to be lifted from time to time. One time one of the men forgot to do this and the lid blew off spewing cream all over the room. Needless to say, there was an awful mess, but it was a lesson neither man ever forgot.

The big fire that passed through the area in '31 was a fearsome thing. Many homes were burnt out, also Dan Gulick's barn. At that time, George was farming in Clairmont and on that particular day, he brought a load of weiner pigs out to Birdsalls via Wanham. George had planned to stay overnight, but when he saw the smoke clouds billowing in from the southwest he decided he had better head for home.

It proved to be a rash decision, however, and he got caught right between two fires, one on either side of the highway. It wasn't long until the straw (that had been a bed for the pigs in the truckbox) caught on fire. It was lucky indeed that there were plenty of sloughs and water around in those days to put the fire out, because this happened more than once during the hectic journey. "It was pretty terrible, and there were times when I actually had to drive over fallen trees that were still on fire. I finally made it through. The first man I met on the other side was none other than Constable Rivers." "Where did you come from?" he exploded. "Everyone is supposed to be stopped at the other end!" How many other fools are there in there?" "As it happened, one or two cars were caught and never did make it through," George concluded.

Ted Henry, a neighbor of Fred Birdsalls, seeing the fire approaching with unbelievable speed through the tree tops, packed his bedroll and placed it in the middle of some breaking that he had. Ironically though, when the fire had passed, Ted's bedroll had burned but his house still stood. Because of the prevalence of fires in the area, straw roofs were never used.

Jim and Mary Beange were George's closest neighbors, and often they helped each other when the need arose.



George Sayle

On one occasion George and Jim Beange were clearing land together, some distance from the Beange home. Young Lyle was about to make his appearance into the world. It had been arranged that should Mary need Jim for anything while he was working, she would hang a white cloth outside to summon him. Sure enough, on that momentous day the men spied the signal and hurried back to the house. As they suspected, it was time to head for the hospital. The roads were terrible and the mud was so deep that they took both the car and the team of horses. Whenever the car got stuck they would hitch the team on the front and pull it, until they reached a place where the car could go on its own. By the time they arrived at the highway near Woking, they were all pretty uptight! They did get to the hospital in Grande Prairie in time, but only just! The car had been George's 1927 Chev, which he later sold to Ted Henry, just prior to leaving for the army.

Another trying trip was undertaken by George when another neighbor became very ill. Hitching up his team of horses to the wagon, he set off to fetch the district nurse from Wanham. Mud was up to the hubs all the way. The nurse, at that time, was the lady who was later to become Merv Hill's wife. She didn't hesitate for a moment but obligingly accompanied George on his mission. Upon arrival at their destination, they discovered that the neighbor had passed away. Changing teams they started again back through the mud to Wanham. It was 17 miles each way making a total of 68 miles in all!

The police at Spirit River were notified of the death, but the conditions of the road were so bad that they only got half way to West Vale. They relayed a go-ahead to the family to proceed with the burial.

Since no one had money in the early years, *trade* was the byword. Among those things traded for was all-purpose flour. Rycroft had a mill at that time, and many homesteaders traded wheat for flour. Others went to Sexsmith to the Warren mill. They too made good flour, cereal and bran. Farmers often traded cord wood here, because this was what the mill used for power.

Summing up his story George concluded with, "through it all, Canada is a wonderful place to live. It has treated me very well and I have no regrets!"

GEORGE SAYLE

George Sayle, the eighth president of UFA, was born and educated at Ramsey on the Isle of Man. After arriving in Canada in 1928, Mr. Sayle worked on a farm in the Peace River area of Alberta, and in 1929 homesteaded at West Vale.

Mr. Sayle organized, and was president of, the Bear Lake Rural Electrification Association. He was also president and secretary of the Twin Lakes Rural Telephone Association and a member of the Agricultural Fair Board of Grande Prairie.

For many years, Mr. Sayle was a delegate to United Farmers of Alberta. In 1947, he was elected a director and served on the board until 1963, when he was elected

president. When Mr. Sayle became president, the locals, which had been an important and integral part of the UFA structure since 1918, were still in effect. In the early days, these locals were the cultural, educational and social hub of the rural community and from this base UFA built a strong farm organization, similar to today's Unifarm.

During Mr. Sayle's twelve year term of office, many sales records were broken, and United Farmers of Alberta gained recognition as the major farm supply co-operative in Alberta. In 1974, earnings were over 5.5 million dollars, and 3.7 million dollars were returned in cash that year to the members. There were now over 140 direct Petroleum Agencies and Member Associations and 19 modern Farm Supply Centres in Alberta. Membership was over 50,000.

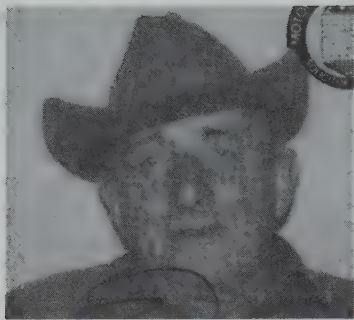


Bill McCartney presenting George Sayle with a gold watch for 25 years service with the U.F.A.

In 1975, George Sayle retired to his farm at Sexsmith, Alberta. A man of great integrity and dedication, his astute guidance during UFA's years of dynamic growth, plus a personal warmth that endeared him to the many people he was associated with, earned for him a special place in the history of United Farmers of Alberta Co-operative Limited.

From 1918 to 1950, the locals had also served as the vehicle through which members combined their buying power to purchase carload quantities of coal, wood, apples, honey and flour. However, conditions had changed rapidly in the agricultural industry and in the rural community. Each year more and more members requested a direct account and suggested, for a variety of reasons, that they found dealing through the local awkward and inconvenient. The great increase in business put a heavy load on many local secretaries, who were active farmers themselves and found it time consuming to keep essential records. Many members did not receive a statement of their purchases from the local, and there was a strong demand for statements to be sent each month directly to the members from head office.

Due to this increasing demand by members for farm supply business to be done more effectively on a direct basis, all administrative duties were transferred to the head office on August 1, 1966.



Hans Shmidt

HANS SHMIDT

It was through the Lutheran Immigration Board that Hans Shmidt and Fred Light came to Canada in May, 1927. Under an agreement with the C.P.R., transportation was provided and work was found for the new immigrants at Hay Lakes.

Fred and Hans had gone to school together where both had been members of the Boy Scouts. Hans served as a Bank Clerk in Berlin prior to coming to Canada. He also had farming experience.

In the fall of 1927, these men drove by car over the Athabasca Trail to the Heart Valley District where they filed on homesteads. Fred farmed there for many years and Hans continues to farm his own land which has grown from one quarter to three.

Hans' mother came to live with him in 1930 and, for a number of years, worked at the University in Edmonton. She moved back to Heart Valley and lived with her son from 1939 until her death in 1943.

For many years Hans maintained a fine herd of Shorthorns and was a remarkable horseman. He was shown some recognition of his skills when he was chosen as a judge of horses at the Alberta Provincial Plowing Match.



Hans Shmidt at 20 years.

FAMILY HISTORY OF J.H. SCOTT AND FAMILY

by Joan Scott

Joshau Henry (Harry) Scott was born on October 24, 1888, in Carleton Place, Ontario, of Irish-Canadian parents. He was raised on a small farm with several brothers and sisters. He was trained as a barber and a miller. Harry left home as a young man in his teens and went west. For a while he worked as a barber in Lacombe



The Scott Family. Lawrence, Harry, Nellie with Allan, Albert and Harvey.

but preferred the outdoors so he went to work as a guide in Banff and Glacier National Parks. Later he worked as a cowboy on Ray Bagley's ranch, east of Red Deer. He married Nellie May Johnston in 1916.

Nellie Johnston was born in Crawford, Nebraska, U.S.A. on August 19, 1885. At the age of four, Nellie, and her family joined a wagon train which was headed for Alberta, Canada. The group travelled to Winnipeg, where they caught the train for Alberta. Nellie's family settled in Morningside, Alberta, where her father later owned a store. Nellie worked for her father in his store until she went to work at the Bagley ranch, where she met Harry Scott.

After their marriage Nellie and Harry rented a farm near Lacombe, where they lived until 1930. Lawrence Harry was born here on April 4, 1919, and Albert Wesley on September 1, 1920. Harvey, a nephew of Nellie's, was adopted by the Scotts. The Scotts tragically lost two other baby boys at birth.

The Scott family moved to a farm in the Buffalo Lakes area in 1930. They remained there until the spring of 1934. Their next move was to Belloy, where they went in search of homestead land. The move was made with horses and sleigh. When the family got to the Saddle Hills, a sudden change in temperature, typical of this time of year caused the snow to melt so quickly that it was necessary to change the sleigh runners for wheels. During this stop all the chickens got loose and had to be caught before they could continue.

The Scotts' first home in Belloy was a tent on a hayrack. They then moved to a log house, on land rented from Selby. Allan Arthur was born here on September 7, 1935. Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Rosinski, from Heart Valley, were present at the birth.

Harry Scott got a homestead about two miles east of Belloy on what was then the highway; later it became known as the Fox Creek Road. Harry and Nellie each applied for a quarter section of land. The new house was built in 1938. The trees for the house were cleared from the site where the house was built. The house was made of square timbers cut at Solomen Ouelette's sawmill. The timbers were fitted together with moss between them.

The first 9 1/2 acres cleared on the Scott homestead were easy to clear, as it was partially prairie. The

homestead was proved up with these 9 1/2 acres. The first land was cleared by using a team of horses. A large hay fork rope, 60 feet long, was attached to a log, to which a chain had been fastened. The chain was pulled by the team. The kids were sent to climb the tree to put the rope around it. The weight of the log would pull the trees out by the roots. Most of the trees were large black or white poplar. Later on, land was cleared with a caterpillar owned by Eddie Emard.

The Scotts raised cattle, alfalfa and grain. They also had pigs and chickens. Like many other homesteaders, they sold weasel and squirrel pelts. There was always plentiful game to hunt for meat. Harry Scott was one of the first farmers in the area to buy a threshing machine. During harvest time the machine and crew would travel around the district threshing grain.

Many bears, deer, moose and other wild animals and birds abounded in the area, in those early homestead years. The following is an account told by Harry Scott.

ANIMALS

I had two good bear dogs. One Sunday morning a bear was trying to get into the pig pen. The two dogs saw him and went after him. He turned these two dogs completely upside down. Then I got a shot at him, but I missed. One morning a bear came so close to the open window I could have reached out and grabbed his hair!

There were lots of moose, too. A cow moose had her baby two years, right close to our buildings. She used to bring her calf out into the yard looking for food.

Harvey liked to drink, so he wanted to put up a barrel of moonshine on the homestead, but I wouldn't let him. I told him to just go across the road to a birch tree where there was water and everything, so he did. One time he went out to look at his brew and it was down about half way in the barrel. A bear had been at it. We put a sack over the barrel and tied the 25-20 rifle up to a tree and aimed it down, so that when the bear pulled the gunny sack the gun would go off. It shot the bear right through the heart and she died right there. Stanley Karpinski was at our place grinding grain and we didn't want him to find out what was there, so we couldn't go and look after we heard the shot until he went home. The bear had two cubs that were up in a tree, close by. The boys cut the tree down but I don't remember what happened to the cubs. We had a pet bear cub for a while, and also a pet coyote.



Albert, Lawrence and Harvey Scott.

You couldn't break that coyote of the habit of killing chickens, so we had to get rid of him.

THE BIG FIRE

There was a big fire passed through south of Belloy in 42 or 43. It started west of Belloy and went right through to Tangent, about one and one half miles in width. Fred Lewis' farm was right in the path of the fire, so Fred and a couple of highschool boys from Spirit River went up to see if they could save some of Fred's livestock. When they didn't return Ethel became worried, so Mrs. Socquet took Allan Scott and Harold Lewis with her in her car to look for them. There was fire on both sides of the road when they got there, so they turned back, barely escaping themselves. Everyone thought Fred and the boys were burned, but they had chased the stock into a field and escaped the fire. Fred Lewis lost everything, but miraculously the Scott farm escaped by about 1/4 mile. Fortunately, the fire burned quickly and skipped some areas. The community donated the lumber (meant to build a skating rink) to the Lewis family to build a new house.

In 1943 the Scott family left the farm and moved into Belloy. They bought the store from Archibalds. Harvey had his own farm and Albert worked on his father's farm. Lawrence joined the airforce and was sent to England, where he stayed until the end of the war.

Allen did not start school until the family moved into Belloy, as there was no school close enough. At this time he started school in Belloy school, situated two miles north of Belloy where the Fred Kozeluk farm is now.

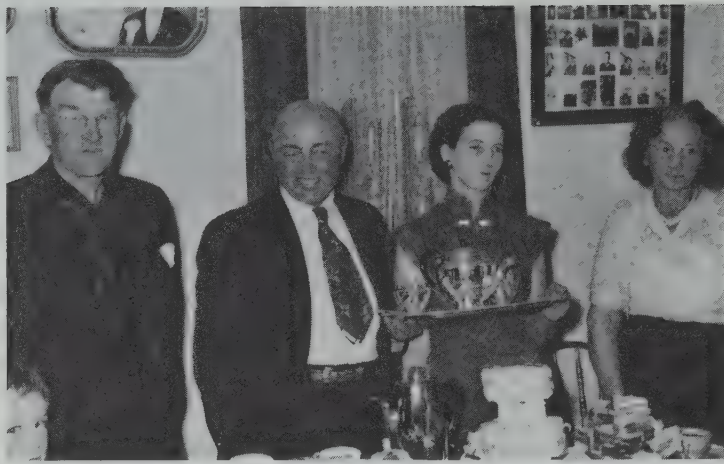
In 1945 Harry bought a garage from Allan Archibald. He began selling Massey Harris machinery in 1946. Shortly afterward a new garage was built. The store was run by Nellie and girls that she hired. One of the girls was Esther Sorenson. In 1947 Lawrence married Vivian Porter, a teacher from Clive, Alberta. Albert married Esther Sorenson in 1948.

In about 1951, Harry and Nellie sold the store to Bill Lewis and bought a farm 1 1/2 miles south of Belloy owned by Mrs. Mykalichuck, formerly the home of an early settler, James Ferguson. Nellie and Harry lived there with their youngest son Allan. Allan married a teacher, Joan Sather, from Wanham, in 1957. Harry continued to help the boys farm until his retirement. Allan, Albert and Lawrence ran the machine agency and garage, as well as helping their father farm until the early 60's when they closed the garage.

Lawrence and Vivian have three sons; Richard, Kimberly, and Earl Glenn. Richard is married and lives in Edmonton. Kimberly works in Grande Prairie and Glenn lives in Duncan with his parents. Lawrence and Vivian moved to Duncan, B.C., in 1977, but Lawrence continues to farm in Belloy, coming here in spring and staying until the crop is off in the fall.

Albert and Esther have two sons and one daughter. Varley has one son, Elvin. Sharon is married and lives in Wanham, she has one daughter, Hollie Joy.

Allan and Joan have two daughters; Donna and Debra. Donna is attending the University of Alberta, and Debra is working in the Wanham area. Both are married.



Harry and Nellie Scott's 30th Wedding Anniversary. Left to Right: Harry Scott, Elmer Bodette, Toots Bodette and Nellie Scott.

Harry and Nellie Scott were active members of the community. Whenever there was work to be done they would be there. The new hall, that was built in 1948, the school addition, the church and the curling rink were some of the projects that the Scotts helped with. Nellie helped to raise money, clean up, put on dances and other activities. She was an active member of the Belloy Ladies Community Club which was responsible for the operation of the Community Hall. For years Harry and Nellie looked after the hall, cleaning it, and making sure it was cared for properly.

Nellie was known by everyone for her interest in activities involving people. She would be right there if there was a comic play, a concert, a dance, or a ball game to be organized. Later on she tried her hand at curling. If you didn't see Nellie at some community activity you'd probably find her in the berry patch. Picking berries, especially blueberries, was her delight. You might also find her with her animals, the cows, chickens or turkeys.

Harry also had a very active life. He not only loved animals, but he had also a talent for mechanics which he passed on to his sons. His children and grandchildren would delight in getting him to tell stories which he told with a comic wit in his lilting Irish accent.

THE SCRIBA - ROSINSKY CLAN

by Martha Scriba

It was in the year of our Lord 1927, when two young German emigrant men, who had met on the boat coming over to the "Promised Land", started homesteading in Heart Valley. They had picked the most inopportune season for their endeavor, late fall with the onset of winter. True, they had worked out around Edmonton for a few months to learn of the Canadian way of life and a smattering of the English language, but were utterly unprepared for the climatic conditions of their new homeland. No long johns, no rubbers with or without felt liners, no mitts, neither leather nor woolen ones, no machinaws or heavy shirts or pants. They learned quickly though, and the good old Eaton catalogue proved to be very valuable in more ways than one!

Julius Scriba and George Ficher built a simple little poplar log shack and when the cracks allowed the below

zero temperatures to seep inside, they had the brilliant idea to set up their pup tent inside the log edifice. A small stove for cooking and heating, and an additional airtight heater proved even to be a faster warmer-upper, until the tragic day when both men went to chop down trees for a larger home. A chinook made the airtight roar up and the whole house, with contents, was a heap of ashes when the men returned. Undaunted, they started anew, living for a while in canvas shelters.

Both men worked hard, clearing and breaking land, working out when there was a chance, and so slowly established themselves until each had 50 acres under cultivation. Then they moved into separate living quarters on their own land.

HOLD IT PARTNER

Both were pleased with this arrangement, since they were of different temperaments and dispositions. It happened more than once that they didn't exchange the time of day for several days, while at the same time eating at one table and sleeping in one bed. Scriba always was too warm and without words opened the door, whereupon Fisher, who liked it warm, would just as silently get up and close it. In later years, they laughed about those incidents, but the partnership, on the other hand, enabled both to get ahead faster than if they would have each forged ahead alone.

Over the next few years more German settlers arrived, encouraged to settle in the same area by the Lutheran Church Mission. In 1929 or 30, Mr. and Mrs. Rosinsky and their only daughter and her husband. Mr. Rosinsky was an optometrist in Germany, but was forced by the inflation and circumstances to emigrate. The Rosinskys, who were 48 and 43 respectively when they came to



The Julius Scriba's first home - 1936.

Canada, worked very hard and cleared land with a vengeance. Mrs. Rosinsky, known to the neighbors as 'Mrs. Rosy', in the early years was a willing helper when a new little settler put in his or her appearance.

Their son-in-law had returned to Germany in 1934 and the Rosinsky's daughter, Martha, married Julius Scriba in 1936 - hence the Scriba - Rosinsky heading of this article. In 1944 when the Rosinskys were well established, a bushfire, started by flying cinders off the train, driven by strong winds and helped by dry conditions, burned the Rosinsky house to the ground, partly destroyed their

sows and piglets, burned the cow's udders so that some had to be killed. Since the loss was very hard on them and they were coming up in years too, they were encouraged by their children to build close to the Scriba place. With Alex Dopher's help they built a small cottage and lived there, farming with their eldest grandson Otto's help, until they retired to the Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River. Over the years the Scribas raised a family of three boys and two girls.



The Scriba Family - 1969. Back Row, Left to Right: Edward, Otto, Fritz (Fred). Front Row: Kathy (Scriba) Snyder, Martha, Julius and Rosemarie (Scriba) Baum.

ROBERTSON ASSOCIATE

Julius specialized in registered seed grain. He had quite a reputation as a seed grower and won many trophies at exhibitions, but his pride was a small lapel pin, which showed that he was a Robertson Associate, the highest honor a seed man can attain.



Mrs. Elizabeth Hauser, Mrs. Woodward (Eileen Parlee's mother) and Grandpa and Grandma Rosinsky in front of Pleasant View Lodge in Spirit River.

In 1967, he had the misfortune to dislocate his right shoulder twice, making any kind of lifting very painful. Since son Fred, who was elevator agent for the Wheat Pool, showed interest in being a farmer, (both boys, Otto and Fred, had been at Vermilion Agriculture School) the senior Scriba retired in April, 1968, to Grande Prairie and Fred took over their farm.

The Rosinskys resided in the Lodge for seven years. When Mrs. Rosinsky passed away February, 1970, Grandpa Rosinsky lived with the Scribas in Grande



Hi! Ho! Silver! Otto Scriba, 1935.

Prairie for nearly two years before he was moved to Swan Haven Nursing Home, where he still resides. God willing, he will celebrate his 97th birthday in March.

The Scriba children are all married. Otto and family farm the Rosinsky homestead; Fred and family the Scriba place; the youngest son Ed and family lives in Fort St. John; Rosemarie (Baum) and family live in Grande Prairie and Kathy (Snyder) reside with their children in Valleyview. When you look back upon those early years, when we were young - you marvel at what you could accomplish in one day! We had big gardens and canned all the produce, pickling, preparing, blanching, canning for 3 hours each batch - oh no madam, there was no deep freeze, in fact there was no electricity. We picked the wild fruit, baked bread, churned and helped during haying and harvest, and I still pride myself in proclaiming that my family always had homemade jam on the table. It was a good life!

Yes, we went back to the old country in later years, when we were more prosperous, but we were always glad to return to "our" Canada. In 1973, when shoveling snow became too much of a chore to handle for Julius, we moved into the newly built senior citizens' Aurora Court. There we were happy until May, 1977, when Julius became very ill and had to spend three months in Edmonton hospitals and finally passed away October 1 in Grande prairie Hospital. A lonely Martha has moved into a single apartment at the same place and is adjusting more or less successfully. We had a good life and are grateful to God, who gave us so many joys in our children and our work together.

JUST BRUSHING TEETH MOMMY

One amusing memory (at the time, there was nothing amusing in it for me) stands out among others - it may sound like a tall tale, but is the truth and nothing but the truth! Ed was 3 years old and it was harvest time. We had our wheat threshed and the outfit moved on to Boeski's place to thresh his wheat, before returning for supper to our place. Ed loved to watch and begged to go there, - an impossible dream. For me there was washing to do, no automatic washer!, bread to bake, replenish the cookie supply, etc. It was a glorious day and I worked with purpose and a will, when the quietness around the place felt "strange" and I ran to call for Ed. No answer, but I spied in the far distance a little red dot on two fast



Grandpa and Grandma Rosinsky. Martha and Julius Scriba on their 25th Wedding Anniversary in 1961.

working little legs - way up on his way to the threshing outfit. So I ran and picked him up under my arm and ran all the way back - so much to do in so little time. I told him in no uncertain terms to stay in the yard, which he promised to do. When I checked up on him, he was in the yard, standing on the top of the stock tank, which in turn stood on a wooden underpinning, jumping up and down on the tap, the precious moisture running out left and right of the tap, which was ready to part with the tank. I ran to catch the last water in a 5 gallon pail before I administered a few well placed slaps and the warning to be a 'good little boy'. Promises, promises! When I looked again, he sat astride the gas tank, hose down in the yard and pumping happily! That took the cake! So into the house and closer supervision. He disappeared, crying, into the bedroom, when an ominous quiet told me better to look - there he was, sitting on the dresser. In one hand was a clothes brush, in the other, squeezing hard, a tube of toothpaste, which was transferred generously to the brush. All he was doing - can't you see, mommy?? he was going to brush his teeth and if that wasn't being a good boy. -? So I had enough and put him to bed, where he rested from his work, and I was able to catch up in peace and quiet with mine!

PHILIP P. SEIBEL AND FAMILY

submitted by Ruben Seibel

While living in Lodi, California, my dad Philip P. Seibel and his brother, Isaac Seibel, and cousin, Jake Berg, heard about the wonderful homesteads to be had in the Peace River Country of Canada. They became very interested immediately, and decided to send Isaac to investigate. His father-in-law, Mr. Ziprick had already filed on a homestead there.

When Isaac looked some of these homesteads over, he finally decided on three that joined each other. These parcels of land were one and one-half miles north of Peoria Seventh Day Adventist Church. He sent pictures back to Lodi, for my dad and Jake to see. They decided it looked promising, so instructed Isaac to file on one for each of them. Isaac returned to Lodi after doing so.

The three families then sold all of their property and prepared to move to a very strange experience, especially for my father, who had been in the grocery business for many years.

We moved to Peoria, Alberta, from Lodi, California in the late summer of 1927. In our family were my dad -

Philip, my mother, Charlotte (Lottie), my older brother, John, then fifteen years old, myself (Ruben), then twelve, two year old Melvin and sisters Lillian, seventeen and Jean, under a year. The oldest child, Bertha stayed behind with her husband, Bob. The twins, Allen and Irene were born at Peoria some time later.

We left California in a 1926 Chev. Touring car. Isaac and Jake drove an older model Overland Touring car. Many times we had to put chains on in the mountains, such were the roads then. Seems to me, we were on the road almost a month. Little did we know or realize that it was to be the most enjoyable part of our lives for many years to come.

Parent's of Alfreda, (Isaac's wife) lived in Bently, Alberta, at the time. We all stopped there for a few days, where my dad traded his car for a team of horses, a democrat and twenty dollars. He then shipped the democrat and horses by freight. And we took the passenger train the last step of our journey.

BLACK OF NIGHT

I can remember when we got to Slave Lake because the tracks were in such bad shape, the train rocked and swayed like a ship on the high seas. The train went so slow, it just barely moved. But we finally got to Wanham in the black of night. It seemed as though we were in the deep jungle, as there was only a box car for a railway station, and nothing else. The town was a half mile south of the railroad tracks.

Fred Reiswig was there, waiting for us with horses and wagon. We spent most of the night driving to Fred's place. There were deep, water-filled holes in the road, and if that wasn't bad enough, it seemed the wagon kept bumping into trees on both sides of the road. That's how narrow the trail was. This is now the main road to Wanham from Peoria.

Never having seen the bush before, especially in the dark, I was expecting bears and wolves to attack us!

When it turned light, we were horrified to see the country, so wild and desolate. We couldn't see houses anywhere - only dead trees laying all over the ground and second growth poplar approximately ten feet tall.

My dad, brother and I, took axes and started to clear a spot big enough to build a house. We worked all day and didn't clear a spot nearly big enough. We never went back to that quarter again. Dad cancelled the first one and filed on another, where we made our home. This land is situated one mile east of the Wanham road and two miles west of Harold Reiswig's store.

MICE BY THE TAIL

The house was built out of green, wet lumber from Reiswig's sawmill. For insulation, we used green sawdust. Not very comfortable. After some time, the boards shrunk to leave cracks about three-quarters of an inch wide. The sawdust would trickle on to the floor. We could see mice playing on the sawdust through the cracks. Now and then, when their tails would stick through the cracks, we would sneak up and grasp their tails, pull them through and beat them to death, on the floor.

The house we built on the new quarter burnt down in later years, and we lost almost everything. The neighbors were very good, helping us with whatever they could. Hughie Fraser moved out of his house until a new one (which Dad had already started) was built.

We three green-horns then started logging, which was quite an experience. My brother and I pulled a two-man cross cut saw. We'd never seen one before, much less used one. We managed to get a fair load the first day though, and from then on, got a little better each day. Many times we went to work in thirty below weather. We didn't have a thermometer, and when we found out how cold it was, we were quite a way down the road, so we just kept going. We did this for seven winters.

The first summer, we cleared and broke forty-five acres with four head of horses and a wooden beam fourteen inch plow. Dad bought this plow from T. Eaton. We cleared for other people, also. We worked seven days a week at that time. The pea-vine and vetch grew so thick and tall, it was very difficult to walk through. Most of the dead wood was underneath this, which made clearing very difficult.

The grass fires sure were a hazard, with a south-west chinook wind. Several homes and granaries, some filled with grain were burned. We took wet gunny sacks and tried to beat the fires out, many times succeeding.

In the summer we mostly cleared land. My mother, dad, brother and I cleared close to six hundred acres by hand, and many, many acres of roots.



John Seibel with his horse, Peggy, taken in 1930.

MEALS TO LAST

Our main food staple was mostly moose meat and ground wheat, which we used for flour, porridge and also coffee. For coffee, the wheat was ground, then roasted. Meals then stayed with you. In fact, to this day, I can still taste them. That's why I still can't eat moose meat or Sunny Boy porridge.

There are still some very pleasant memories, though, such as house parties and school dances. I started to play the fiddle for dances at West Vale. From there on, I played at many parties and dances. I lost interest after reaching fifty years of age. Now my fiddle, which was my father's, hangs on the wall, and all it does now is bring back fond memories.

In the winters when it was too cold to work in the bush, we used to trap weasels in the Kadot Creek. Trapping was good until around Christmas time, when the weasels quit

running. Then trapping was poor. Prices were poor too. One dollar and fifty cents for the big ones, and five to ten cents for the small ones which they called 'kits'.

During threshing time we worked eleven hours a day. I worked mostly on Fred Reiswig's rig. We started in the morning long before daylight and worked until after dark at night. Many nights we slept in a straw pile, certainly never undressed. We really worked up an appetite, eating more than the horses did, I'm sure!

LUCK MOSTLY BAD

Even at that, at times the stooks were snowed under until spring. Dad had that luck on two or three occasions. One winter when the rabbits were so plentiful and the snow was pretty deep, the rabbits ate all the heads off the stooks and left only the straw. Many times the grain was frozen before cutting. One year, Dad had that happen so he only cut the grain that wasn't frosted too much, like on the knolls, and had that threshed. It graded poor chicken feed. After threshing, he tried to burn what was left standing and the wind changed and burned the straw pile, granary, wheat and all. He had lots of luck, but mostly bad!

STONE BOAT NURSE

One other experience we had was when the twins were born. It was on March 17, 1931. Dad sent John and me to town to get the nurse, with a team of horses and the stoneboat. It was nine miles to town. All the nurse had to sit on was an apple box, and we had to rush. That stoneboat skidded from side to side on the icy road. She had to hang on for dear life. When we got her there, the twins were already born, and Mrs. Whittie Prosser was there, as midwife. She was a wonderful, helpful person. After the nurse had a cup of coffee, (which was ground roasted wheat) we took her back the same way. I bet she prayed to God she would never have to experience a thing like that again.

Such was our life for nine years. Dad then sold eighty acres to Adolph Beck and moved to the Pine Lake District, southeast of Red Deer, Alberta. He started another grocery store. After a few more years, he moved to Kelowna, B.C. where he died at the age of eighty-two. Mother died three years earlier.

John went to Clairmont, Alberta, to work for Allen



Left to Right: Albert Davis, John Seibel, Ruben Seibel, Art Davis, and Bill Davis holding Virginia Davis. Melvin Seibel in front - 1934.

Sims, (Lillian's husband). He worked there for a few years, then also moved to Red Deer. He joined the army in 1939 or '40, and was discharged in a few months for health reasons. He then went into the construction business, moved to Quesnel, B.C., and bought Baker Creek Cabins. He did very well at this. He sold out there and moved to Kelowna, where he is now retired at the age sixty-seven.

Myself, Ruben, went from Peoria to Clairmont and worked there for a year. I also moved to Pine Lake, where I met my wife, Beulah Margaret Shephard. We were married in 1937. In 1944, I joined the Army, was discharged in 1946, and bought a half section of land through the V.L.A. We had seven children, losing the youngest boy, fifth in the family, at the age of fifteen, in a tractor accident in 1964.

In 1965, my wife and I and our two remaining daughters at home then moved on to Armstrong, B.C. We bought nine acres of land on which I grow three and a half acres of alfalfa and four and a half acres of asparagus. I am also retired at the age of sixty-four.

Melvin and Irene still live in Red Deer. Jean and husband, Bill Zimmer have a dairy farm at Leslieville, Alberta. Allen and wife live at Prince George, B.C. Sister Lillian died at Clairmont in 1951.

THE JOHN AND MARIE SEMINUK STORY

by Irene Sather

As he gazed across the yard at the towering spruce grove behind his garage, he recalled the day he planted it.

"I remember pulling the small trees home from the pasture on a stumpboat. (Also known as a stoneboat.) They were no more than a couple of feet high. I never imagined that they would grow this tall!"

John Seminuk was born in a small village in Poland in 1909. He came to Canada in search of a new life, at the age of twenty. He was met in Prestville in 1929 by his brother. He worked in the area for a number of years on a farm owned by Alex Anderson.

John then travelled to Vancouver where he worked in a lumber camp. After an injury on his job, he returned to Belloy area and filed on a homestead in 1938. A fire had gone through that area a few years back, therefore all that remained was black stumps. For five dollars an acre, Justin Sinkevich was hired to break some of the land with his horses. John later cleared much more by hand.

The first year he had a crop, it cost him eighteen dollars. He paid this to a neighbor, Harry Bihun, to put in the nine acres.

The only water available was in Vixen Creek, which ran through the middle of his quarter. He recalls it being so hard that one could 'barely swallow it.'

In the spring of 1939, he proceeded to build a log house. Some of the material used was purchased from Solomon Oulette, who owned a sawmill in Belloy.

In 1944, John received title to his land. By this time, he had forty acres cleared. That same year he rented the land out to Jim Ciura and went to work for the railway, in Dawson Creek. In the years that followed, John worked in various areas of Alberta before returning to Wanham.

In the spring of 1949, John got a job in the Wanham Hotel. He served beer and washed floors for eighty-four dollars a month, plus room and board. John Richter owned the hotel at that time. During his employment, John familiarized himself with many people in the area. He worked there for a period of five months.

John's first car was a new, shiny grey '49 Pontiac. He purchased it from Lazoruk's Garage in Rycroft.

In 1950, John married Marie Swerediuk. Marie had grown up in the Rycroft area and worked in Spirit River Hospital at the time. They lived in Rycroft for a short time, before moving to the farm.

John and Marie had three children. Their first child was a boy, born in 1951. Their second arrival was a daughter in 1955, and then another son in 1957.

In the years that followed, they acquired more land and settled down to a farm life. John took up trapping. This is something they both enjoy very much, even now that they are retired.

SMART BEAR!

John recalls a time when he and his brother-in-law disturbed a bear out of his hibernation in the spring. They decided to track him in the snow, but soon dropped that idea when they found the bear was smarter than they anticipated. After a short distance, the bear had back-stepped in his own tracks and then jumped way off to the side before continuing his escape. The two men wasted no time dropping their pursuit and leaving the area.

John and Marie identify with many in their farming experiences. They toiled on the land, preparing, seeding and harvesting their crops. Their first tractor was a Massey-Harris Pacemaker on steel wheels. It was a slow, tedious job to work the land. When the time came to harvest, John and Marie participated in the threshing crews that moved from one farm to another. John Bogdanek, Justin Sinkevich and John Noga each owned their own threshing machines.

FOXTAIL FIRE

Marie recalls a time when John was out threshing, and she was home alone. Her oldest son was playing while she was doing chores. She turned around to check on Stephen and almost froze in her tracks. A large portion of the foxtail infested barnyard was on fire! Apparently her son had found a match that one of the threshing crew had lost while moving the machine, and lit it. Marie ran frantically for the dug-out. In panic she drowned her pail, and the only thing she could do then was to take her shirt off, soak it and beat the flame out. A strong wind was carrying the flames toward a straw pile and granary full of grain, while the fire was burning upwind towards the barn. She managed to put the blaze out, wearing herself out to near exhaustion. Marie then had to frantically search for her son. She found him in the house, hiding under the bed. This was one of her most harrowing experiences. Fire was one of the most dreaded hazards of early life.

In the years that followed, bigger and better machinery replaced the old, and the combine replaced the threshing

machine. With these also came electricity. There was no more need to pump lamps to get brighter lighting, or to run out to the snow-filled well where one kept perishable food in the summer. Life was becoming easier all around.

In 1959, Marie's parents, Nick and Ann Swerediuk moved into a small house in the yard. They lived there for eight years before moving to Grande Prairie and then to Spirit River.

John and Marie's children attended Eaglesham School. All three now reside in Grande Prairie.

Stephen married Claudette Bouvier of Salmon Arm, B.C., and they have a daughter, Natasha. Stephen had forestry training and worked for the Alberta Forest Service for a number of years. He left that job and is now working for an oil consulting firm.

Irene is married to Chris Sather of Wanham, and they have three children, Trevor, Angela and Kyla. Chris is a carpenter and they have a partnership in a construction company.

Sergie is married to a local Wanham girl, Lois Hryciuk. He worked for a couple of years in building construction and is now working for a steel company.

John and Marie still live on their original homestead, enjoying their retirement. They spend most of their time outdoors. John and Marie trap in the Birch Hills in the winter, and fish in the lakes of the area in the summer.

SEVRE, ERIK

by Lily Sather

It was the custom in Norway that the eldest son in the family had the first opportunity to take over the parental home when the parents retired. Since Erik was not the eldest in his family, he had to find another way of earning a living. So he and a neighbor's boy left their homes in Bergheim, Norway and went to the United States. When they arrived they went to work for a farmer who had emigrated earlier, from their home province. The boys worked there for two years.

During his first winter, Erik went to school to obtain a better knowledge of the English language. Later he went to Wisconsin and worked in a bush camp. His job there was to bring cut logs in to camp from the timber. It was while at this camp that he met a man who had been to the Peace River country. His description of the area and its opportunities intrigued Erik. Later he saw a newspaper ad written by a Halvor Gore, advertising available homestead land in the Sexsmith area. He was soon on his way.

While enroute to the Peace he met another Scandinavian, Andrew Stone, who suggested that rather than stopping at Sexsmith he should go directly to Grande Prairie to see what land was open for settlement. He also suggested that when Erik had that information, he would do well to contact Peter Myrland in the Wanham area.

Erik did as advised and soon had obtained his homestead. Since it was late in the fall, he stayed with the Myrlands until spring.

Erik's homestead was located where the Harold Peddys now live. Later, he traded quarters with Oscar Bjerglund - this land bordered Marius Olsen on the west. (N.W. of 33 T.76 R.3 -W of 6th)



Erik Sevre

BANNOCK

As with others, money was very scarce for Erik, and he lived on moose meat and potatoes. His bread was bannock. This was made from flour, water, salt, and baking powder. It had to be made daily, because if kept for any length of time, it hardened and wasn't good.

Erik did some trapping for a short period. He didn't do badly on weasels - they brought from ten cents to a dollar, but though coyotes brought \$8.50, the freight on them amounted to \$8.10. Weasels, he found, were hard to kill. One time he remembers taking a weasel from a trap and striking it against a tree, then sticking it in his pocket. Andrew Stone was accompanying him on that trip, and suddenly he noticed the weasel's head emerging from Erik's pocket. He tried to stop the animal - only to be rewarded by a sharp nip.

ON THE TRAP LINE

Late one fall Erik hired Peter Jensen to take him and his equipment to Dunvegan by team. When they arrived, Pete helped him build a raft, and on November 9th, Erik started down the river. He planned to spend the winter trapping north of Peace River Town, but there was a very heavy snowfall, and the freezing ice and snow finally made rafting down the river impossible and he was forced to land near Berwyn.

The first thing he tried to do was find some wild game, but the snow was so deep in the valley that the animals had obviously sought higher ground. Erik then struck off up the hill to see if he would have better luck on the level. No sooner had he topped the riverbank, than he met a moose - head on, and in minutes he had bagged it.

He discovered an abandoned log shack about one half a mile from the river. It was in pretty fair shape and even had a cookstove in it, so he immediately moved in. He then proceeded to set his trapline. Deciding that much of the small game and coyotes would travel on the river, he set most of his traps on the ice. The next morning when he went to check the traps, he discovered that a chinook had arrived during the night and he had lost all of his river traps in the run-off. This was a devastating setback, but he continued to trap with the equipment he had left.

One day, after the river was thoroughly frozen over, he decided to explore an island that was in the middle of the

river. He put on his skis and started across the intervening area. Suddenly without warning, he struck thin ice, and he and the skis fell through. Quickly he spread his arms out over the ice, and managed to keep from being drawn under. He rolled out onto the ice and was able to bring the skis up with him. Expecting to break through again at any moment, he scrambled away from the hole as fast as possible, his icy, water-soaked clothing freezing as he went. He managed to reach his cabin and it was fortunate that a fire was still going because, by that time, his mittens were frozen so solid that he couldn't get them off his hands.

In late December, because he had too few traps to make it pay, he decided to give up and go home. He only had ten cents left. He shipped his bedding to Wanham by train - c.o.d. Then he loaded his other possessions on the skis. Donning his showshoes and pulling the loaded skis behind, he started out on foot. The temperature was between fifty and sixty below, (F.) but ninety miles and three days later, Erik arrived at his cabin. His bedding had not yet arrived and this proved a real inconvenience. When it finally came, Erik paid the c.o.d. charges by selling a coyote hide to Otto Nolde.

FEAST OR FAMINE!

Shortly after he got back he went to see his old friend, Oscar, only to find that he had run out of meat and was living on bannock and had been for the past month. They both needed meat, so the next day Erik started out on snowshoes in an effort to find some. By night fall he had his moose and went back to tell Oscar the good news only to be told that he could, "Keep his moose," because Oscar had shot three deer that day himself!

Bears were seen fairly often around Erik's place. One especially proved to be quite a nuisance. He would come out to the edge of the grain field and rob the bundles from the stooks then eat the wheat. One day Erik waited some distance away for the bear's arrival. When it stuck its head out from behind a stook, Erik shot it. The bear raised up on its hind legs, spun around and fell dead.

Erik recalls another lone settler, John Franklin. He was an Englishman, and lived in a tent on the north side of Kadot Lake for two winters. Erik recalls, "He made great pancakes. I helped him build a log cabin, but he didn't stay long."

As the years passed, Erik added to his land holdings and farmed in the area from 1929 to 1969. Then he sold out and returned to Norway, taking with him a bear hide and two beaver skins. There are reported to be only six bears and no beavers in Norway!

Six years later he came back to Canada, and now lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

MY EXPERIENCE IN GETTING TO KNOW WANHAM AS A DISTRICT NURSE

submitted by Lillian Carson (Shearer)

It was a very cold winter season in January of 1943, when I arrived by train at Wanham Railway Station. The train ride in itself was quite an experience, with many

U.S. as well as Canadian passengers, travelling to the activity of the building of the Alaska Highway.

I was met at the station by Helen Harrington, wife of Ed Harrington, postmaster and secretary of the V.O.N. Association. In the warm hospitality of their home with their daughters, I was able to become briefed on the nursing services required by the district, and the details of carrying out the duties and privileges of District Nurse in Wanham District.

I first went to the nurses' home and nursing station on the hill, about halfway between the business section and the two schools then used. The tiny house provided a bed-lounge living room with coal and wood heater, and a kitchen with a cookstove and table. A back shed attached, served for storage.

From the first day on, a most enriching part of my life began, for which I am most grateful. There was a well stocked supply of drugs and equipment for diagnostic treatment. A record of charges made for home or office calls was given to the secretary-treasurer, who billed the members of the association. House calls were three dollars, if I recall accurately. Office calls were one dollar. The office consisted of a tiny waiting room and a treatment room with single mattress accommodation which took up the front portion of the building.

Transportation to and from the homes in the district was provided by the family requiring care, horse and buggy, or cutter as weather allowed. If a doctor's care was required, it meant one of the owner's of a car in the area supplied the transportation to Spirit River to Dr. Law, or to Grande Prairie to a doctor of choice. Both towns had a hospital.

PETE NELSON

I had neighbors - wonderful neighbors. Pete Nelson, across the street, was some 70 years young, and with lively curiosity, kept me in tow. He was a bachelor whose health at that age was enviable, and he was most kind to me.

Across the land to the north side, lived Octave and Aurora Prevost and Diane, at that time, whose warm friendship and general 'know-how' was invaluable. I hope their days are as happy as they made mine.

7 PAIL COW

West of me lived a couple who became family, Bob and Kate Keillar. (Bob gave me away later.) They shared their lives through hospitality and humour, and depth of feeling and support that was boundless. To know them was to know their cow also, although her name slips me. She was an amazing creature. Having been trained to hold her milk until she saw her milker coming, she would patiently wait, and eagerly greet their homecoming. It was my privilege to water her on one occasion when they were away. The nursing station had one of the very scarce wells, and when I brought her over, I started pumping and she started drinking, and we went on this way for SEVEN pails. I was certain she might rupture something! She lived to provide gallons of milk to various members of the community.

During my eighteen months in Wanham, I met so many wonderful people who became fast friends. Christensens - on their farm about two miles out, and with whom I am in touch today. They were the busiest bees and so competent in their homesteading and farming experience. Moose meat, ludefisk, root cellar vegetables and cream. with lots of fun, comes to mind.

My home-call visits were varied and covered a fair area, Belloy, Heart Valley and the Burnt area. People took me in as one of them, and if required, kept me overnight.

Throat and nose examinations at the school brought me in touch with the teachers, Laura (Settle) Lipinski in the high school, and Ozan Prevost in the public school.

In the town were Tansems, who had the meat market and a son Leroy, who escorted me around in his happy flivver. They introduced the custom of coffee and visiting, that was so pleasant throughout my stay.

My mother, Meta Shearer, came to live with me for a few months, and in her energetic sixties, learned to cross-country ski and taught piano lessons at the homes of a few pupils in town.

Music, too, was an active pastime for me at a dance or church service, as time allowed. I remember Vera Sandcock and Louis Tansem dancing a Norwegian polka, light as a feather, with the grace of professionals.

The highlight of my life came when Mrs. Macdonald asked me to substitute for her at the organ, at the Presbyterian Church. Aubrey and Dorothy Hancock (Catechist and wife) saw that I met my husband, John Carson, who was minister at Forbes Presbyterian Church in Grande Prairie, and came to perform wedding ceremonies and dispense communion.

Since John retired, after diverting from pastoral ministry to teaching ministry in Indian communities, we have lived on an island we purchased in Lake of the Woods, Ontario. Here we live year round and are learning by trial and error how to finish the inside of our home.

I learned to stook in Wanham, when the Keillars invited me to share the opportunity of stooking for Mr. Leriger, while his sons were away and he not well enough to do his crop of oats. My feeling was of deepest appreciation of the outdoors on that early morning shift - and the likelihood that farmers could probably solve all the problems in the world, while manually constructing each stook.

I hope Wanham is the same durable community, steadily growing in activity, enjoying the Alberta Heritage fund, for which it waited so long, to develop the potential of its resources and lend opportunity and fulfillment to its dwellers.

To all Sathers, Prevosts, Jacobsens, MacDonalds and Tansems and others I wish I could name, I wish a good life, and happy memories.

THE SHMYRS

by Sally Shmyr

Joe was born in Ukraine, and came to Canada in 1928, to Rycroft with his parents where they settled in the Volin area. Later on, when he was able to get out he worked for

a lot of farmers, such as Labreques, taking contracts for clearing land by hand. (I even remember hearing Sam Stemashuk of Highland Park saying how he worked with Joe and made his first ten dollars.) He then headed to Peace River to file on a homestead, and it is still his home fifty years later. It sure is something else when you hear those men get together and bring back memories of the 1930's! Joe had his own chopper and wood sawing outfit, and in the winter he went to farmers doing custom work.

Joe and I met in Dawson Creek, while the Alaska Highway was about to be completed. He drove a truck for the U.S. Army and then for contractor, George Schmidt. They hauled coal and had to load and unload by hand. If you think you know what hard work is, try this - with many sleepless nights. They also hauled oil to Whitehorse.

I worked as a waitress at the Royal Cafe in Dawson Creek. All I ever saw was men, for very seldom did couples come in like they do now. The meals were thirty-five cents for pork chops or veal cutlets! There was not too much choice in menus, and you sure got tired of the same thing.

In those days Dawson was booming, because the war was on and the Alaska Highway was used to send everything north. The Americans were the top boss, but Canadians got stuck with the nice bill. They wasted so much and destroyed lots of what Canadians could have used somehow. After the war it took Dawson a long time to get mobile, as they lost so many people who were there just while the war was on.

EXPLOSION

My memory recalls February 13th, 1943, a beautiful day when I was working the morning shift from 7 A.M. to 4 P.M. When I got back from work, having to walk one half mile, John Rawlyk's hired man, Ernie, came in and told Olga and I there was going to be an explosion. No sooner had he said it, than the explosion went off and shook the house we were in. There was black smoke up in the sky and with the wind blowing west, it did not take long before the whole block was on fire. They did manage to save the Co-op store. The U.S. Army stored dynamite in an old barn on the same block as the Co-op store.

I never did find out who set it on fire. I know that Olga and I were worried where John was, but he finally came in at 7:30 p.m. and took us to see what was going on. He said he was knocked off his feet and lost his cap. It was quite a sight; the whole block was all gutted, and water was running because of the chinook. The cafe I worked in and all the other businesses had their windows broken. The news reported there were eight people killed, but in those days that kind of news was kept quiet. I went the next day to see; the fire was all out. The U.S. Army was patrolling all night and it sure gave me the creeps. The cafe dishes and things were all scattered, but they cleaned it up in a few days and we were back to work. A few years ago they had this incident on a quiz program on T.V.

Later that year I got a job at Charlie Lake, working for

the U.S. Army in a Laundry camp which supplied linen for army camps. There were about forty girls employed there and I worked as a waitress. It sure was good pay compared to what I got working at the cafe. Joe and I decided to get married on May 21, 1944. Those girls made a shower for me and gave me cash, with which I bought myself a set of dishes and silverware in memory of them all. One of the girls was from Sexsmith, Elsie Steinke.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH

My parents insisted on making a wedding, but I did not think they should spend their money as it was not easy to get it. I remember Dad buying everybody a permit book in order to get liquor. I can recall each permit book costing fifty cents. It seemed like they could not get by without it. Mom prepared all the food, as there were no halls (except one in Belloy) but no one ever made weddings in halls. Bihuns made Mary's wedding at home, so the same went for me. People came by teams of horses, and some of the people I recall were: Joe Bilinskis, Harry Bihuns, Jim Curas, Nick Boydonyks, Bidulkas, Nogas, Chamberlains, Los's, Popiks, Mazuriks, Sochas, Pazuiks, Pibiaks, John and Justin Sinkevichs, Urness's, and the Kostashs. We got married in Codesa in the building that served two purposes. It was the school I went to and then got married in. I don't think that there were too many of us in that area that managed that and, to tell you the truth, I never planned or dreamed of it. We had our dance in a shop, and all I remember was a guy by the name of Gorichuk playing music.

A few days later we got on the train back to Dawson, with no honeymoon. We stopped in at Grande Prairie and had wedding pictures taken at the Art Craft Studio, then continued to Dawson.

Joe worked for the U.S. Army, this time as a mechanic, for a while, but that truck driving was still in his blood.

We looked for a house through real estate, and you would not have believed what they offered us to rent. It was a place that was plastered with mud and just north of Dawson on the hill. We could not believe it, but seeing is believing. We ended up putting a down payment on a place which was small, but our own. My sister, Emily, came to go to school and my dad worked in the winter on some sawmill, and would stay occasionally.

We finally got my dad to locate some land for us, which was cheap in 1947. We bought a half section a mile east of Belloy. Hudson Bay owned the land and I thought being so close to town was just great, however there was no road - just all bush. We really didn't give a great deal of thought to what we would have to give up, to start from scratch, but when one tries hard enough things eventually come out okay. It was lucky we had 'strong backs and weak minds', (as the saying goes, and right now I think it's so true.)

I was so happy, because the kids would not have far to go to school in Belloy. At that time it was a nice small town - having a cafe run by Dale Ferguson, a store run by Mr. and Mr. Harry Scott, and their boys had a Massey dealership. Budd Dennis came later with a jewelery shop, one of the Lewis boys had a butcher shop, Maude Ar-

chibald a store, and the elevator with a man to run it. There was also a railroad station. It looked like Belloy would grow. It was booming in 1948 to 1950, when all the veterans came and took the land, and the government cleared it for them. We had Mr. and Mrs. Hugh McPherson and family to the south of us and on the east, Lloyd Evenson and Roland Caouette. The government gave the veterans a living allowance for a couple years. A lot of them pulled out, but those that wanted to stick it out are still here, with quite a few passing away at an early age.

Lorraine, our first daughter, started school in 1950 and her teacher was Vivian Scott. Our kids only knew Ukrainian, but it didn't take them long to learn English. Ray started a year later and they had to walk on the railroad, so I could spot them now and then between the bushes. Then in 1958 Wanham decided that it wasn't feasible for us to have a school in Belloy. There still were quite a few kids, but they said our kids were missing out on a lot that Wanham had to offer. We didn't believe it, and it is still proof today that the kids who went to school in Wanham from Belloy dropped out sooner and never did complete high school, which is a real shame.

FARMING

We got our land cleared by hand. Joe bought a 15-30 McCormick deering tractor with breaking plow. He made a dozer and pushed big piles of big logs and my job was burning them. We had no time for entertainment, except when John and Peggy Zabloski came over and brought a case of beer. John was a section foreman and he owned a car, but it was closer to walk. Besides we had no road for a few years, until finally I wrote a letter to Gordon Taylor, Minister of Highways. He had a heart of gold and sent an outfit to make this road. Mom and Dad had to make a trip of 22 miles. If it wasn't for them it would have been very dull, for Mom was very good at sewing and gardening. After we got some land broke, I never had a garden failure and it never had manure. I never had a garden cultivator - only a hoe, and never had help from my husband, as he was always too busy picking roots or building.

We got lumber from my cousins, the Bodulka boys, to build a house and we didn't put a cement foundation, as money wasn't plentiful. So we built a 16' X 24' house. It had lots of windows, that Joe had got from the army surplus. Mr. Urness, my dad and Joe put it up in a short time. We brought the windows when we moved our stuff, so we lived in a windowless house for a few days and sure had enough fresh air. I helped Joe put the boards inside and the siding everytime it rained, as he was always working in the field. The first year we got 60 acres cleared and ready for crop the next year. Joe had to go to work, as there was no relief or welfare. That was the last time he worked out, as one never made money-only enough to pay expenses. We figured we would do without many things and stay put.

GOOD PEOPLE NEVER DIE

We put our first crop in 1949, and we sure can't forget

that. We never had a drill so we had to wait until my dad was done. That spring was late and we put in our wheat the last day in May. It was a dry spring but having new land, it grew anyway. We averaged thirty bushels and it rained at night. In those days no one had a fridge, as there was no power, but we had to have enough food for about ten men, which was my dad's threshing outfit. The next day the men were going home because it was too wet. Around nine in the morning a stranger walked up to our place and asked if he could have a cup of tea. All the men from the threshing crew were at the table, where I had most of my leftovers from the night before, so I said sure. This man was in his late fifties and I asked him where he was going and he said to Vancouver. We all looked at each other, wondering when he planned on reaching it. He kept eating until there was nothing left on the table. As he was leaving he thanked us and said, "Good people never die". That's something we'll never forget.

From then on we kept breaking land and buying machinery. After we finished breaking, we bought a new Massey 44 deisel from Scotts and a 3 bottom plow, thinking it would be big enough, but we found it took a long time to get things done. So in 1956 we traded it for a John Deere 80 at Sandercocks in Wanham. Our first truck was 1952 International. We had got a combine, as threshing was getting too expensive and it was a lot of work cutting by binder, and stooking wasn't easy either. Lawrence Scott let Joe have a Massey 21 combine on credit, pay when we finished combining. Another incident we experienced was when we went to the Royal Bank in Spirit River to borrow some money to pay for the combine and other things. The banker got smart and asked us how come we bought the combine without seeing him first. He thought he knew better than us about what we should have. Joe told him if he didn't lend us the money then someone else would. He sure shut up fast and gave in, but we didn't care for his way.

We had two more children in 1956 and 1957, Ardi and Ernie. By this time Lorraine and Ray were pretty pleased for awhile - until they had to look after them, when it came time to pick roots or harvest. I was hauling wheat or in the bin shovelling grain because we didn't have a loader or truck with hoist. (In fact, we still have the first one we got.) It's too bad how our free enterprise allows Canadian people to be the slaves of the machines. The darn machines are made of steel and last for a long time and people's health can be shot any day.

We rented land for nine years from Ivor Pearson, who was the NAR road master, married to Elsie Hass. It was out of our way, so when Wilbar Sterling decided to sell his land on the west side of our land, we bought it (and another sixty acres of bush to clear and more roots!) That was in 1963. It sure was handy, no more travelling, because it sure takes a lot of time, especially when it comes to combining.

Our house had fungus and was impossible to live in, so we had to start on a new one but we made sure we put a cement foundation. In 1962 we got hailed out 100% with no insurance and a house to finish. We could not borrow, so we did not build a big house. We put in power, phone and water but no sewer until 1977, I was not going to

have things I could not afford.

We had all kinds of years, good and bad, so we never did get wealthy. Our children grew up healthy, with only the misfortune of Lorraine getting hit on the head by a ball at the Eaglesham school while playing. Ray always had a bad habit of picking up lumps of dirt and throwing them. I kept telling him not to, but I always say the Lord will punish if you do not listen. One day the teacher brought Ray home with his front tooth missing and swollen gums, so Joe had to rush him to Fairview. Ardi did not suffer any sports mishaps; neither did Ernie. Connie is our baby who is in grade 11 in 1980, and taking it in Spirit River. She wants to become an accountant. Ernie is working at the Treasury Branch in Brooks and it is his third year. He got married on August 4th, 1979, to Janice Morgan of Peace River. Ardi finished her schooling in Grande Prairie, went to Red Deer College for one year in accounting, then worked for Royal Bank in Red Deer. There she met her husband, Sid Talsma. They are now making their home in Bentley, where Sid is in the welding business. Lorraine finished her school in Wanham and worked in the Royal Bank in Spirit River. There she met her husband, a boy from Devale, Dan, son of George and Lena Dolhan. They now have a family of three boys; Tony, Bowen, and Kelly, and one girl, Wanda. They are farming, while Lorraine drives the school bus and Dan works for the Neighbours Drilling Company in winter. They feel the farm is the best place to bring the family up. Raymond is married to Sharon Hovedebo of Sexsmith. They have Darrell and Sherrill, and are making their home at Rocky Mountain House. Ray works on the grader for contractors.

We hope we will someday leave our farm, which we have built up over the many years, and retire somewhere. Those years on the farm have left us many memories in which to yearn, and it sure is hard to leave something to which you have become so attached, but when we are ready to enjoy life it is time to quit working, as one can do just so much.

THE JOHN SINKEVICH FAMILY

by Nita Urness

During the winter of 1929-30, John and Eudakia Sinkevich were in the midst of making the most momentous decision of their lives. At that time they lived near the village of Kalanowka, in the province of Velin, Poland. John owned approximately five acres of land,



Mr. and Mrs. John Sinkevich.

and on that, together with whatever carpentry work he could obtain, he supported his wife and three small children (Nita age 6, Sergie, 2 and Nick, nearly one year).

In 1929, John had begun to build a house for his family. At that time, the five of them were still living with John's parents, and Eudakia was beginning to look forward to having a home of her own. However, John was becoming increasingly restless and dissatisfied with his lot in Poland. Accumulating more land was next to impossible, and their financial situation, which was limited, was not likely to improve in the future. John was seriously considering emigration to one of the developing countries, where opportunities existed which were not available to them in Poland. He had been considering Uruguay in South America, but other Ukrainian families from the village who had gone to settle there, wrote back describing the oppressive heat and other hardships of a tropical climate.

In the meantime, John's brother, Justin, and his new bride, Christina, had emigrated to Canada, and Justin wrote enthusiastic letters back to his family in the old country about this vast new country he had chosen to settle in.

Eudakia had grave misgivings about leaving her home and the familiar people and environment of her village to move to a new, unknown country, thousands of miles away, where the language would be unfamiliar to her. However, Justin's letters had convinced John and Eudakia's brother, Fred Kozeluk. In spite of Eudakia's doubts, Fred and John applied for immigration to Canada. On March 27, 1930, John, Eudakia and their three children, along with Fred Kozeluk, his wife, Annie and their infant daughter, Agatha, embarked on the ship, 'Adonia,' at Danzig, bound for Liverpool on the first lap of their journey to Canada.

After nearly two weeks of ocean crossing, the two families landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and from there took the train to Quebec City.

MEASLES AND A WATER TAP

In Quebec City, their first major mishap occurred. All four children contracted measles and both families were quarantined in a Quebec City hospital for two weeks. Even in the relatively sheltered atmosphere of the hospital, the strangeness of this new country was evident. People dressed differently, customs were unfamiliar, and above all, communication was difficult. Everything had to be relayed through an interpreter. Also, luxuries and conveniences existed here which had been unheard of back home. Running water was even an enigma. One day little Sergie toddled into the bathroom and managed to turn on a water tap. Very shortly the floor was flooding, while Eudakia tried frantically to stem the source of the deluge!

Finally the ordeal with the measles was over, and although everyone's resolve was weakening, John, Fred and their families again boarded the train. This time they were bound for Edmonton, Alberta, to rejoin Justin who was working as a farm labourer in that area. The trip across the prairies was an ordeal which took approximately a week.



The Sinkevich Family. Front Row, Left to Right: Nick, Ruby, Mr. John Sinkevich, Mrs. Eudakia Sinkevich, and Vera. Back Row: Morris and Nita.

One incident on the train typified the trepidation the two families were feeling on their way out west. A friendly man on the train gave each of the children a banana. When he was gone, Eudakia took them all and threw them out the window! Bananas were not imported to the part of Poland she came from, and she wasn't entirely certain they were edible.

Arriving in the small town of Chipman, near Vegreville, Fred and John were met by Justin and Christina, and their first son, Peter, who had been born in Alberta. That summer, the men worked for farmers in the area, and their wives and children boarded with their employer's families. As fall approached, the three men decided to seek homestead land in the Peace River country, and took the train north to Belloy where the post-master there, Mr. Bice, convinced them to file on homestead land in that area. The land just north of Belloy, where the three families eventually settled, was covered with heavy timber and muskeg. The heavy bush pleased John immensely, because in Poland lumber had been a valuable commodity, and here he could own miles of timber himself.

ELEVEN IN A 12 x 20

After filing on their land in Spirit River, the three men set to work clearing enough land to build a small log cabin.

When the twelve by twenty cabin was completed, they returned to Chipman. Using their meager savings from summer employment, Fred, Justin and John bought a couple of horses, two milk cows, a few pigs and chickens, and returned to Belloy by train with their families. They arrived on October 14, 1930, and that night it snowed nearly two feet! Fortunately, the snow did not last long, and the men were able to cut and stack enough wild grass to winter the animals. For the entire long winter the six adults and five children shared the tiny 12' x 20' log house.

In the spring, Justin and Fred began to build their own homes, and started to clear a little agricultural land. That summer, John managed to clear about three acres of land by hand with a grub hoe, and had begun to regret his

earlier decision to homestead in such a heavily wooded area. The grub hoe was used to dig all the dirt away from a tree until the root system was exposed enough to push the tree over by hand. It was painstaking and tedious work. In addition, hay had to be gathered again for the following winter. It was cut down in the sloughs with a scythe. A make-shift rake, made by nailing a bar of wood onto a wooden stake at right angles and pounding nails into the bar at regular intervals for teeth, was used to rake up the cut grass, which was then stacked for winter use.

In June of 1931, John and Eudakia's second daughter, Vera, was born. In spite of the demands of the new baby, Eudakia managed to spade up enough ground to grow a small garden.

In the summer, mosquitoes were a major problem because of all the low-lying land and the resultant muskeg. People and animals alike had to be protected by 'smudges,' made by burning damp grass in a bucket.

During the next couple of years, John continued to clear more land and plant as much grain as possible. He also prepared and stacked logs for a new house, as the family was still living in the 12 x 20 log cabin. In June, 1933, John and Eudakia's last child, Ruby, was born.

FOREST ON FIRE

In the late summer of that year, a forest fire swept through the area north of Belloy, destroying nearly all the bush on John's homestead, and scorching the earth so badly in places, that nothing would grow on it for years. The log house was nearly lost as well, and was only saved by beating out the sparks on the grass roof with wet sacks. The smoke made it difficult to breathe for days, and momentary relief was obtained by digging holes in the ground and holding one's face over the hole for fresher air.

In addition to losing everything else, John's carefully stacked logs for his new house were destroyed, and the house was not built for nearly another three years.

In September of 1933, when Nita was ten years old, she was considered old enough and strong enough to start school at the Steele School, which was about a four mile walk away. Also, by that time, she had learned some English, which made it easier to cope with a classroom situation. Many evenings however, she was so exhausted after returning home from school, that she had to have her supper in bed! Many days were missed in winter because the weather made it prohibitive to walk so far. A year later, Sergie began school at the Steele School as well, and Nick also began his education there.

In 1938, a one room school was opened in the back of the post office in Belloy and the Sinkevich children enjoyed the luxury of having a school only a mile away! Later a log school was built on the Kozeluk's farm for the Belloy area children, and Vera and Ruby started school there.

The next few years were filled with hard work, but the number of people in the area was steadily increasing, and social functions were arranged whenever possible, especially during the winter months. House parties were frequent, enlivened by considerable quantities of



Back Row, Left to Right: Nita and Morris. Front Row: Ruby, Vera and Nick.

moonshine. Someone was nearly always available to provide musical entertainment with the fiddle, guitar or accordion.

In 1939, when war was declared, most of the young men in the area enlisted. In 1944, when barely old enough, Sergie volunteered for the army, but fortunately did not have to leave Canada before peace came.

Shortly before the war began, Nita finished school and obtained work as a live-in housekeeper, working 10 to 14 hours a day, 7 days a week for \$20.00 per month, to help out with the family's expenses.

Nick, Vera and Ruby continued their education, first in Wanham, then in Spirit River, where they lived in a school dormitory. After completing high school, Nick returned home to farm. Vera went to Red Deer where she worked at the Provincial Training School for a time, and Ruby stayed in Spirit River, where she got employment in the bank.

In December, 1946, Nita married Sanford Urness and they remained in the area to farm. Sergie married a young school teacher, Joyce Stainsky in November, 1947, and they moved to central Alberta shortly afterwards. Sergie and Joyce moved a number of times to various points in Alberta, before finally returning to Belloy area, where they continue to operate their own business.

Vera met and married Bud Wardrow in Calgary, in 1952, and they continue to reside there.

Ruby married Ed Thacker, whom she met in Spirit River, in February, 1955. Ed's career necessitated numerous moves throughout Alberta for a number of years, but they are now happily settled in Peace River.

John Sinkevich passed away in December, 1952, after a lengthy illness at the age of 58, and is remembered by all who knew him as one of the hardest working, most dependable and neighborly pioneers of the area north of Belloy.

Nick continues to farm on his father's original homestead where Eudakia, now approaching 80, lives as well. She had 13 grandchildren now spread throughout Alberta. If Eudakia still has any regrets about coming to Canada, she doesn't mention them.

JUSTIN AND CHRISTINA SINKEVICH AND FAMILY

Justin, at the age of 19 married Christina Buren, also 19, on July 21, 1928. On March 14, 1929, they immigrated from the Ukraine to Canada, arriving in Edmonton. The immigration officer found them a job just outside of Edmonton. Christina did the farm chores and Justin worked in the fields. Their pay was \$35.00 per month. With the seeding done, they had to find more work, so they moved to Mundare. Christina worked for Mr. Sanuik and Justin got a job cutting brush at Vegreville, for one dollar a day. Later that summer they went back to Chipman for harvesting, and that winter, February 24, 1930, Peter, their first son was born. Christina recalls that her doctors name was Dr. Strelchuk.

In May, Justin's brother, John and his wife and family, along with John's brother-in-law, Fred Kozeluk and family, arrived from the old country. Justin, John, and Fred left their families in Chipman and headed north on the freight train. They found their homesteads north of Belloy. The bush was so dense! There was a small clearing only on John's place, so this is where they built a log cabin. When the cabin was built, they went back to Chipman for the harvest work. After harvest they all packed up for the move to their new home. Mr. Sanuik had given Christina a small pig, a hen with chicks, a goose and a duck. The three families lived together in John's cabin that winter. In the spring of 1931, John and Fred helped Justin and Christina build their house. They plastered the walls with mud and grass, and when it was completed, they moved in with their meagre possessions. They grubbed brush from sun-up to sun-down, trying to clear a few acres. Justin bought his first horse while working for Mr. Noga. The horse helped pull out stumps and clear brush. They also gained a cow by working for neighbors.

Christina grew a big garden, and they snared rabbits for meat, but with winter coming again they needed money for flour, salt, sugar etc.. They heard you could get money from the government, called relief. Justin went to Spirit River where the agency was, and told them his story. The agent replied that he couldn't give him any money. So Justin went outside. A while later he came back in with a big rock in his hand, and told the man he would break the windows so they would have to put him in jail. The agent finally decided he could give Justin some money, which turned out to be five dollars a month for four months.

TRAP LINE

Justin started a trap line in the Burnt River. They made wooden stretchers for the hides. He found that by boiling the snares, traps and clothes with spruce bough, he could catch more coyotes and fox. With his white mare, Queenie, Justin's main source of income for the next twenty years came from his trap line. He built some log cabins along his trap lines for shelter for himself and his horse. One night he heard Queenie stamping outside and



Justin with his furs - Christina in background.

when he went out to see what was the matter. There were 35 or more moose. Queenie seemed real nervous, so he brought her inside the cabin for the rest of the night.

Justin had many experiences while out on his trap line. He recalls being out with John Mazurkewich when they found what they thought was a badger's den. Justin decided to go inside to scare the badger out and John would shoot it. He said he crawled in and felt all around and, all of a sudden, he could see two big eyes. Justin said he moved pretty fast trying to get out, and luckily he did, because he had just been face to face with a mother bear and two cubs!

The Urness family had moved in next door in 1931, and the boys did some trapping, too. One evening Justine rode up to one of his cabins on the Burnt River and saw smoke coming from the chimney. Thinking it was occupied by a couple of the Urness boys, he decided he would play a joke on them.

"I had just killed a bear and had the hide with me on the horse, so I took it and threw it over my shoulders and scratched on the door."

Clarence opened the door, saw the hide and slammed the door shut, yelling to his brother, "Get the gun, there's a bear out there!" They loaded up and by the time they decided to open the door, they could hear Justin laughing outside.

Another incident happened when Clarence, Justin and Willard were digging a hole in a sand hill to make a cabin in the Birch Hills. They dug a hole about five feet deep and decided to call it a day. They would put the roof on the next day. They went to sleep in the hole they had dug. "About two o'clock in the morning, there was a helluva commotion, with legs and bodies all over the place. Three moose had run right over us!"

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

The Urness family spent some time teaching Justine and Christina to speak English. They also liked to play cards, and Justin took to cards like a duck to water! He

decided that he liked to play poker and they would all go into Belloy to play. This began to happen more frequently. After awhile Christina decided that she'd had enough of this. Christina was taller and huskier than Justin. She's been heard to say, "I could carry him around under one arm all day."

About six o'clock one morning she walked into town and found out where the boys were playing cards. She walked in, grabbed Justin by the hair and took him home. She soon broke him of his poker playing, and also his cigarette smoking!

In October, 1932, Anne was born. About a month before that a big fire went through the area. It divided and went north of the creek and about a quarter of a mile south of the homestead. It made clearing the land a little easier. By 1943, all the family had arrived, three sons and five daughters. With such a large family, there were never too many dull moments. One incident happened while Pete was splitting wood. He was using a double bladed axe and Anne decided to play a joke on him. She was sneaking up behind him just as he was bringing the axe back over his head. The axe caught Anne in the middle of the forehead. With a stream of blood running down her face, she ran to her mother screaming, "Pete tried to kill me!"



Left to Right: Justin, John Sinkevich, Nita, Mrs. Urness, Andy Urness, Mrs. Bilinski, Josie Bilinski, Mrs. John Sinkevich, Mr. and Mrs. Duby, Christina Sinkevich, Pete Sinkevich, Fred and Mrs. Kozeluk, Agatha and Henry.

The first tractor Justin got was a Model-A Case, on steel, and he also purchased a breaking plow at the same time. Before long he was breaking land for all his neighbors. In the fall as the days got shorter, he would hang a lantern on the front of the tractor and plow all night. This wasn't without incident, as one night he fell asleep and ran into a granary and another time he ran through a barbed wire fence. He had a piler made for the tractor, and clearing became a 'cinch'. There were lots of kids to pick roots, so the cleared acres started to add up.

Pete started to work on the railroad when he was sixteen and a few years later, Anne married Harry Heck, who was cat-skinning for Lassiter.

Pete got work on the oil rigs, travelling all over Alberta, and in August, 1951, married Marcella Houserman in Taber, Alberta. Bill and Elsie, the next two oldest, went to high school in Spirit River and

boarded in the dormitory there. Bill finished high school and went on to Calgary to take an electronics course. Upon completion he took full time employment with Canadian Utilities. Elsie enrolled in a business course in Grande Prairie, and found employment in Vancouver.

By this time, Anne and Harry Heck had taken up homesteading north of Belloy. In 1956, grandchildren



Justin and Christina Sinkevich - Golden Wedding Anniversary - 1978.

started arriving. Justin and Christina's first-born grandson was Laurence Heck, born in August. In December of the same year, Bryan Peter Sinkevich arrived. Bryan spent the first six months of his life in the Vancouver Hospital.

In July, 1957, May married Louis Panich. Bill married Mary Chrystyn from Hythe in September and most of the crop was snowed under. In July, 1958, Elsie married Don Milner in Vancouver. The following year in May of 1959, Emily married Rudy Permes from Dawson Creek. In March, 1960, Lois married Ernest Socha from Eaglesham, and they settled on the Socha family farm.

In 1961, Pete, Marcella and Bryan moved back to the farm permanently, and that fall Walter went to work for the Department of Transport, taking courses in Ottawa and Toronto before going to the Arctic with the weather branch. Four years later, Justin had a slight heart attack, and Walter moved back to start farming with Peter and his dad. In October of 1966, Walter married Yvonne Lane in Wanham.

Five years later, Justin and Christina decided to move to the Okanagan in B.C.. Mild weather and good fishing convinced them that it was a great place to live. They settled in Vernon where May and Louis and family, (Kathy, Angela, Rosemarie and Marko) were already living. Justin and his sons and sons-in-law built a home. Together they landscaped their two acre lot and grow an abundance of fruit and vegetables.

Winfield, further south in the Okanagan valley became home to Emily, Rudy and family — Louise, Michael and Robert. Rudy was employed by the distillery in Kelowna.

Harry and Anne Heck and family - Larry, Yvonne, and Marty decided that it was such a great country, they

sold their farm north of Wanham and bought a farm in Vernon also. The next spring, Larry, the oldest grandson left the nest and married Pam Herrick from Woking.

Lois and Ernest Socha remained farming in Eaglesham and have three children, Rodney, Karen and Sandra.

Walter and Yvonne and family, Paul, Debra, and Angelique moved to the original farmstead where they presently reside.

Bill, Mary and family, Cheryl, Teresa, Lyle and Robert live in Grande Prairie where Bill is still employed by Alberta Power. In May, 1979, Cheryl married Barry Cerny and soon after moved to High Level, where her husband is employed.

In June, 1979, Bryan, Pete's son, married Kathy Martin of Beaverlodge. They now live on a farm just south of Pete and Marcella's home place, and have one son.

EDITH AND STAN SKIRZYK

It all started in 1930 when I was born in Tubrose, Saskatchewan. Right after that we moved to Wilkie, where Dad rented a farm and scratched out a meagre living on some poor prairie soil. Things were so bad there, that in 1934 he rode the rods to the Peace River country (the land of milk and honey). Here he was able to arrange the purchase of a quarter section of land with 22 acres broken, but no buildings. But then there was no way to make the move. Finally, in 1936, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool paid out a big dividend. Then we had enough money to pay for the rent of the railroad freight car, into which we loaded all our possessions, household, farm machinery and horses. Dad and my crippled uncle rode along with them to the land of the mighty Peace. Mom, my four year old sister, my brother (six weeks old) and I traveled by train.

We arrived in Wanham on October 10, 1936. Earlier in the year a fire had gone through the country and in September there had been a real heavy snow fall. It was sure a desolate looking sight when we stepped off the train. But there was no place else to go and no money to go with, so we settled into a small log shack owned by Mr. and Mrs. Trumpower. Mom and Dad cut logs by hand and built a small log shack, where we spent the first couple of years.

Dad decided that flax could be grown here since he'd seen it grown in the U.S.A., where he came from. He brought the first flax seed into the country and of course was very pleased to see it flourish.

SPECIAL MEMORY

In 1938, in July, Mom and Dad decided that we needed a holiday. Mr. and Mrs. Chris Bankhead and their four children (at that time) and our family packed a few things into a steel-wheeled wagon (including a makeshift tent). We tied a cow behind the wagon (to provide milk for the kids), and headed off for a few days camping and fishing on the Smoky River, at a place called the Meryll Flats. That is one of the special memories of my childhood.

That fall we had a premonition of what was to come.



*Lena Bush,
Edith,
Dennis
and Wilma.*

Dad began to feel unwell. That was the beginning of 4 years of sickness, and in August, 1942, he passed away.

Things carried on for us kids anyway, as Mom took over running the farm and made a success of it.

In 1943, Mom's sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Posty, came to live with us. Uncle Braslin (Posty) and Mom did the farming together, as Posty's bought some land and started farming too.

In 1948, I, Edith Bush, met Stan Skirzyk who had come over from Poland and grown up in the Woking area. We were married in Wanham, in November of 1948, and lived on Stan's farm in Woking that winter. The following summer we bought the farm from Harry Cameron and moved in October of 1949. That was the beginning of a family farming operation that was to last for many years. Stan started farming with Mrs. Bush (Mom) and Uncle Braslin and, as the years passed Dennis, my brother, grew up and filled in a place too.

In 1950 our first child, Carolyn, was born; in 1951 our second, Darlene, was born; and in 1954, Brenda, our baby was born.

The three girls were very close, grew up and had all their schooling in Wanham. Carolyn graduated and went to college in Grande Prairie, then on to 2 years of nursing. She did not go back and do her third year. She met the man of her life and married him in 1971, and at the time of this writing they are living in Kelowna and have 2 children.

Darlene, the second girl, graduated from high school and married her high school sweetheart, Garry Webber, and at the time of this writing they are living in Grande Prairie and have 2 children also. They are also planning on taking over the farm that we farmed for 31 years.

Brenda, the baby, graduated from high school in Wanham, worked for a year in Grande Prairie, married a farmer, and now lives on a farm in Eaglesham.

U.F.A.

During the time that the children were growing up, we operated the U.F.A. bulk sales from January 1957 to January 1965. We were the agents when the station was built on the present site. Then, in 1965, it was back to full time farming again.

Sometime shortly after that, Mr. and Mrs. Posty left

the farm and moved to Kelowna. Braslin since then passed away in Kelowna. So it was Stan, Mom and Dennis that were farming. However by then, Mom was active more in the business end of farming, and less in the physical aspect of it, as Dennis had pretty well taken over the physical part of the operation.

In 1975 Mom left the farm as well, having bought herself a home in Kelowna and decided to move there. That fall, Stan and I decided to do something different. We bought an airplane, took flying lessons, and have since really enjoyed the freedom of flying. It has opened a whole new world for us.

Also in 1965, when we sold the U.F.A. to Morris and Joyce Sinkwich, I started driving a school bus, much to the sorrow of some of the students, and spent 13 years in the service of the Spirit River School Division. Also during eleven years of that time I was an agent for Co-op Insurance, so have many pleasant memories about people I've met. And I've certainly had the opportunity to meet many people, due to the work that we did and my involvement with Unifarm.

And now, as this book is being prepared, we are making a big change in our lives. We've just bought a home in Kelowna and will be leaving the Peace River country. The farm is in the capable hands of our son-in-law, Garry Webber, and his family.

This is especially hard for Stan, but one of the good things about it is the farm is still in the family, and maybe someday we'll come back and see our grandson on the land.

My sister, Wilma, graduated from high school in Wanham, went on to University and became a school teacher. She was married in 1955 and has four children. She is still teaching school and living in Westlock.

Brother Dennis is still left on the farm and owns the original land that Dad bought in 1934.

SORENSEN, HANS (PEORIA)

by Esther Scott

Hans Sorenson together with his two brothers, Halvor and Ole, came to the United States from Norway, in 1905. Hans entered Canada in 1907, and obtained employment in Edmonton.

In 1915, he left the city and went to the Peace River Country - travelling via the Edson Trail and Calais Lake (now Sturgeon Lake). It was compulsory at that time that each traveller to the north be equipped with an eighty lb. food pack.

Upon arrival in the Peace, Hans took up a homestead near Prestville but lost it, when he was unable to put in residence duties within the time limit allowed.

He returned to Minneapolis, Minnesota. There he met Stina Roseth. The two were married in 1922.

In 1927 Hans moved his family to Canada and settled in Sexsmith for a short period. From there he moved to the Peoria District in 1929-30, when he again obtained a homestead. Here the Sorensens settled down to raise their family of three - Esther, Arne and Martha.

Times for them as for their neighbors in the 'thirties,' were indeed hard. When they first arrived in Peoria, they had no place to stay, but Allan Graham offered them



*Right to Left:
Hans Sorenson,
Mrs. Sorenson
holding Arne,
Ester, standing
beside her
mother, un-
named friend
and baby.*

lodging, and this they gratefully accepted until they were able to erect a house of their own. Though only five at the time, Esther recalls being with her parents when they chose the site for their home. She said the brush was so thick in the area she wondered how in the world they'd find room for a house. But with hard work and perseverance, one day it became a reality.

From the beginning the Sorenson home was always open to the ministers of many faiths. Their front room together with that of the Anton Rye's and the Emil Gliège's served as 'the church' in East Peoria, for a good many of the early years. They were never without Sunday School, for Mr. Gliège was their teacher.

One winter when times were extra tough, Hans went north to obtain work in a saw mill. (Quite possibly in the Watson Lake area.) Stina and the children remained at home. It proved to be a rough winter indeed, but with the help of friends and neighbors, the little family somehow made out.

RABBITS

That was the only year that Hans worked away from the farm. Martha remembers that when the bush rabbits were most plentiful her father dug pits in the ground and covered each with a trap door. In the morning there were usually three or four rabbits in each. These were sold for mink feed and shipped whole from Belloy. Towards dusk, the rabbits would arrive in droves at the rail-fenced feed racks, for an evening meal. In an effort to preserve food for their livestock, Esther, Arne and Martha would race around the stacks armed with sticks, chasing the rabbits. If one of the children chanced to slip, it was not at all unusual to land on two or three rabbits.

The Sorensens spoke Norwegian exclusively in the home, and so when it was time for the children to begin their schooling, they couldn't speak a single word of English. They had four and one half miles to go to school, and most of the time they walked both ways. As time passed they were able to ride horseback for some of the time. In the winter their father built them a closed-in cutter, to which they hitched a single horse. There was one horse that was particularly hard to catch and it was often Arne's task to try to do this. Though she was kept

in a fenced-in area, she was very adept at evading the halter, and it was a sheer case of endurance to outwit her. One day while the girls were watching, Arne finally cornered her. The horse realized that she was bested, yet determined to escape, she ran right over the boy. Terrified, the girls rushed to his aid, but although the horse left her hoof prints right on his back, Arne was not seriously hurt and was able to recuperate at home.

NEAR TRAGEDY

Another near tragedy occurred while Hans was helping to saw firewood into lengths suitable for use in the cookstove and heater. A crew of neighbors had gathered at the Sorenson's with a mounted motor-driven buzz saw. The logs were heavy, and as the men pushed them against the saw's block, Hans assisted them. Suddenly his foot slipped on some sawdust covered ice, and horrified, he found himself falling toward the rapidly revolving circular saw. Somehow he managed to stay his fall, but not before the saw had cut him squarely in the middle of the forehead.

Appalled at the sight, the men grabbed him and rushed him to the house. Seeing her husband streaming with blood, Stina promptly fainted, and it was Esther who cleansed the wound and prepared her father for the trip to the doctor.

Hans survived the ordeal, but he was told by his doctor that had the wound been a fraction of an inch deeper it would have proven fatal.

One year at threshing time, another incident caused quite a commotion. Hans had dug a well on the homesite and had temporarily covered the hole with planking. Their large old milk cow began nosing around the well and suddenly for no apparent reason at all, decided to strike off across the improvised wooden cover. There was a loud crash and old Molly fell through the planking, butt first! When the family arrived, they found the cow sitting in several feet of ice cold water bellowing in pain and terror.

With the help of neighbors they managed to extricate the animal and she lived on for several more years, somewhat of a mixed blessing because as Esther said, "Old Molly was a *VERY HARD* cow to milk!"

SCRAMBLED KIDS!

One day the children were supposed to deliver some eggs to the Peter's home. Though they knew better, they decided to ride double on their horse. The animal, being used to a single burden, suddenly rebelled and began to buck. Before they knew it, children and eggs landed on the ground in a scrambled mess.

Once a week in the early years, Esther and Martha walked three miles to the Hegna's to sell butter. On one of these trips they met a big black bear. Esther had been told never to run from a bear, so she cautioned Martha accordingly. Slowly the two began to back away, then moved carefully around and into John Boreland's pasture. As soon as they could no longer see the bear, they broke into a wild run and never stopped running until they reached home.



The Sorensons, Ryes, Bjerkseths, Glieges, Schroeders and Epps at a church gathering held at the Epps.

Some years later while picking berries north of the homesite, Esther again met a bear, but this one had an entirely different nature. Recognizing this, she flung the berries down on the ground between them to distract him - and this time she didn't hesitate to run!

Another time when Esther was riding horseback to Belloy, a third encounter with a bear took place. Rounding a bend in the road, she suddenly came upon a grizzly bear, busily ripping at a carcass. Annoyed at being disturbed, the bear stood over his prey, growling and baring his teeth. The horse shied and leaped sideways, almost unseating Esther. Desperately she managed to hang on, and soon the horse and rider were racing madly away from the scene.

On February 23, 1948, Martha married Alvin Urness, and on June 28, 1948, Esther married Albert Scott. Four years later, on July 19, 1952, Arne married Anne Bjerkseth.

Being alone once more, Hans and Stina retired, and in 1953 moved to Grande Prairie. Stina passed away in March, 1961 and Hans in January, 1968.

Esther and Albert still live on a farm near Belloy. They have three children - Varley and Gordon of Kelowna, B.C. and Sharon of Wanham. They also have two grandchildren. Arne and Anne live on the original Sorenson farm. They also have three children - Wesley, a farmer in Peoria, Dale and Marie, who live in Grande Prairie. There are four grandchildren.

Martha and Alvin live in Grande Prairie and have four children - Shirley, living in Jasper, Darrel in Sexsmith, and Glen and Eric of Grande Prairie. There are five grandchildren.

And so the descendents of Hans and Stina Sorenson continue to increase and, at the time of this writing, are distributed throughout two provinces.

THE SORGEN STORY

by Violet Sorgen

My husband, Hubert, and I moved to the Peace River country in the spring of 1946 from Holden, Alberta. With us we brought our family of eight: Hannah, Sanford, Vivian, Carol, Ralph, Orvis, Duane and Gerald.

We, with our worldly belongings, a few chickens,



Violet and Hubert Sorgen.

cows, household furnishings and machinery, spent our first spring and summer at the Wegh farm south of Wanham.

The house was far too small for a family of ten, so in the fall we moved in with a bachelor about two miles south of Wanham, Ole Lindjord.

FAMILY SAFE

It was there that real disaster struck us. One Sunday shortly after we had moved in, I was in church and Elmer Sather came for me saying the house was on fire. I shall never forget that trip from the church to home, not knowing if I would find my husband and family all alive. Then the profound relief upon my arrival to find them all safe and sound. We lost everything we had moved in with, but it didn't seem to matter - my family was safe!

My parents, the Evensons, who had moved in to Wanham from the Peoria District, let us move into their old house. So, with what few belongings we had stored in a granary on the Wegh place, we moved there in February.

That spring we moved back to Wanham and lived in an old house near Ewanchuks. We lived there all summer, while Hubert and Ralph cleared and plowed some land on our homestead. Sanford worked for Mr. Rude in Peoria and put up hay for our cattle for the winter. Mike Dragomatz, whose land was next to our homestead, offered us his home for the winter, if we would look after his cattle. Once again we moved. That winter Hubert and the boys built a small log house on our place and in the spring we moved in there. Finally a home of our very own! We lived in that house a year and a half, then bought a house in Peoria which we moved to our place. On my birthday in January we really celebrated - we moved into our new (to us) home! Hubert had built a nice barn too, so even our cattle had something to celebrate.

Homesteading wasn't easy in those days, especially since cash was pretty scarce. Everything in the way of clearing brush was done by hand. Everyone, young and

old, was expected to do their share. No only did Hubert and the older children pick roots, but the smaller ones and I were out there doing our bit.

With a husband and a big family to cook for (and sometimes not too much to cook) I really had my hands full. But in the end it paid off as our land was cleared and producing some really good crops.

Soon our children began leaving and going out on their own. Sanford went to B.C. and worked in a lumber mill. Vivian went to Grande Prairie to work, and Hanna worked for Elmer Sather. Chris Sather was just a baby then.

Later both Hanna and Vivian followed Sanford to British Columbia, where they found work. Later Ralph went there, too. I think every mother knows how I felt when my children began to leave home and go out on their own. It is a sad feeling but one has to accept the fact that we don't own our children. They are only lent to us for a few years. But it is not easy to accept.

Vivian was the first to get married, and then Hanna, and Carol. The boys' turn came later; first Sanford then Ralph, Orvis, Gerald and Duane.

Hubert and I are retired now and live in a nice trailer in Wanham. As we look back, we realize that though we endured many hardships it was all worth it. Our children all grew up healthy, happy people, enjoying, as we did, bringing up their children. At 86 Hubert enjoys fairly good health and myself at — well, we have thirty grandchildren and one great granddaughter, so I'm not really in my prime either!

BOARD MOVED

But there were many times when the kids were young I thought I'd never make it - I thought I'd die of sheer fright. There was the time when we came home from town to find Gerald with his breath knocked out of him. The boys had put a wide board up against the house. They climbed a ladder carrying their little wagon and would ride it from the roof top, down the board to the ground. Gerald had missed the board.

Other times they would get a wild horse, try to ride it, then get thrown and half killed. Riding inside a barrel, down a steep hill, almost ended Ralph's sojourn in this old world.

Today we can laugh about these things, and I thank God for sparing both of us to enjoy what has been a very full life.

HISTORY OF KATHLEEN STEVENS

My mother and dad, Nan and Jack Stevens were both born in England. Jack came to Canada before the first World War. In 1914, he returned home and joined the British Army. In 1919, he returned to Canada and homesteaded in Prestville.

In 1920, Nan came to Canada accompanied by Bob, (Jack's brother). Jack met them in Edmonton, where he and Nan were married. They came by train to the homestead.

On July 23, 1921, Kathleen was born in Spirit River. In



Front Row, Left to Right: Evelyn Wrolson, Dora Jacobs, John Duby, Mike Kleapatch, Pat Whelan, and John Jacobs. Back Row: Doris Wrolson, Helen Parks, Loreen Parks, Steve Kleapatch, Pearl Jacobs, Kathleen Stevens, Elsie Whelan, Olga Duby and Mrs. Whelan.

1927, Bob married Grace Johnston, who had come to Prestville in 1913, with her parents and a sister.

In 1928, Jack, Nan, and Kathleen moved from the homestead to House on the Hill, on the way to Wanham. Kathleen started school in Prestville when the school opened. She took her grades one to eight there. She was out of school three years, and then went to Royal Winner and took grade nine.

Grace and Bob had three girls, Jean, Rooth and Dorothy. Kathleen and family stayed on the farm 'till the fall of 1957, when they moved to Rycroft, where they are still residing. Kathleen now has one son and two grandsons.

HALVOR SVEINUNNGGAARD

I came to Canada from Norway in the spring of 1929, and filed on a homestead in Peoria, January 4, 1930. I had never been there, but was informed by Hans Sorenson the location of the homestead. I came to Belloy by train, late at night on January 5th. I stayed overnight in the railway depot. It was 40 degrees below zero that night. In the morning, I looked the town over, and got breakfast from Mrs. Rouleau.

I built a log house on the homestead that winter, and cleared and broke five acres of land that summer.

My wife and our two children, Bertha and Knut, came from Norway in August of that summer, but I did not have the roof on the house, as I had been out working, clearing right of way between Hythe and Dawson Creek. We got the roof on the house, bought a cow from Lawrence Toftner, and began homesteading.

The years that followed were hard times, as there was no paying work to get. We managed to break some more land and grow more crop every year, and in 1937 we got our first team of horses.

Some of our good, friendly and helpful neighbors were: Mr. and Mrs. O.L. Toftner, Mr. and Mrs. E. Gliege, Mr. and Mrs. A. Rye, Mr. and Mrs. H. Sorenson, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Laughland, John Borland, Mr. Graham and Anders Stovene.

Thinking back on those times, they were happy, except

when we lost our son, Knut. Gunder and Helen were born on the homestead.

MOOSE RIDE

Of special happenings was when I rode a big bull moose in the Birch Hills in October, 1930. I had wounded him and had no more shells to kill him with. I tried to knock him down with a big pole, but he turned and wanted to fight, so I jumped on his neck with my knife, and boy, what a ride I got!

I'd love to come back to the north, and hope that some day I can return to Wanham and do some more farming again.



Halvor and Helvig Sveinunggaard in wedding dress.

HOW HALVOR, HELVIG STAY TRIM

by Marth Prytula

*Copied from the paper, KELOWNA TODAY
February 22, 1978*

When was the last time you tried to get into your wedding suit? Or your wedding dress?

Mission impossible, you say? A few pounds here, a couple of inches there. Of course.

But you've been married only a few years?

For shame!

Halvor and Helvig Sveinunggaard have been married for 53 years and they don't have that problem at all.

Not only are they able to wear their wedding suits quite comfortably, but they claim they've worn them more in the past few years than they did during their three-day wedding festivities back in Norway in 1925.

And the suits still look new. Made of finely woven black fabric, each wedding outfit has something distinctive to set it off. Hers has colorful hand embroidery on the bodice, hem and a pillbox hat. His has silver golden chain set with rubies. Around his neck is a colorful scarf used as a necktie ("It's wearing out and I can't buy them anymore.")

Both outfits are hand made and are representative of the Hallindal District of Norway. Even their wedding shoes were home made, but unfortunately did not stand the test of time. All that remains of the original wedding shoes are the silver buckles, which have been placed on newer pairs of shoes.

This wedding attire has come many miles with the Sveinunggaards. In 1929 he came to Canada. She followed a year later. They filed on a homestead in the Peace River country, where they farmed for almost 40 years. They moved to Kelowna several years ago.

They are both charter members of the Sons of Norway Hardanger Lodge No. 109 in Kelowna. It is as a result of this membership that they've made those many recent appearances in their wedding suits - at lodge functions, and also such occasions as the July 1 Folkfest and other multicultural activities.

Lest you get the impression that all they do in their sunset years is parade around in their wedding suits you've got another think coming! Why, a couple of years ago, Mr. Sveinunggaard hauled all the logs and built the rustic Folkfest booth for the Sons of Norway. This past winter at the spry age of 76 he built a 'stabbur.' That's a twelve-by-twelve two-story Norwegian storehouse made entirely of logs without any nails. It will go back to the homestead in the Peace River country, which is presently being farmed by their son.

Mrs. Sveinunggaard used to do a lot of fancy work. But at the age of 80, she finds her eyes aren't what they used to be. She still manages to keep busy knitting for all the grandchildren.

Oh, yes, they've been back to Norway five times since moving to Canada.

But they always came back. "Because Canada is now our home."

You don't have to speak Norwegian to be able to wish the Sveinunggaards many, many more years together in their wedding suits.

But it helps.

"Mange aar tilsemmen, Halvor and Helvig."



THE OLAF TANSEM FAMILY

by Mollie Tansem

The Ole Tansem family came to Wanham early in 1918 from Dooley, Montana, U.S.A. He and sons, Hjalmar and Clifford, come to Wanham on the freight train with the stock and household effects. His daughter, Daphne and her stepmother, came on the passenger train. Cliff often recalled that one of the cows had a calf and it fell out of the boxcar door. He had to jump out and rescue it. The freight went slow. Some miles later he jumped off and got to Wanham ahead of it.

Ole brought 8 head of good work horses, some milk cows, Hjalmar's saddle horse, Blaze, and the dog, Towser. Ole was an expert horseman. He always had a lively driving team. He was a veterinarian. He got called near and far for a sick or injured animal.

He was a deputy Sheriff in North Dakota for some years!

They managed to get a small log house built the first year. They got a big log outhouse. He got it up four boards high and his dad came home from the neighbors with 2 small pigs and put them in there.



Olaf and Sarah Tansem - 1898.

SPECIAL PLACE

Ole was a big jovial man, with a great sense of humor and liking for kids. He surely bought more chocolate bars and ice cream cones for little kids than anyone else. His home became a special place for people to congregate from near and far. Those driving through the country to other places always made it a point of stopping at Ole Tansem's for a meal or overnight. There was always room for a tired team of horses and weary traveller. No one ever went away from his place hungry. His wife was a good cook but it must have been quite a job for her too, to cook many meals for unexpected guests. She passed

away in 1930. There was always a big crowd at their place for Christmas.

Ole had the first dairy in Wanham in 1927. He sold milk at ten cents a quart, and it was still 10 cents when he quit in 1935.

He was born near Barnesville, Minnesota in 1872. He passed away in February, 1943.

HISTORY OF CLIFF AND MOLLIE TANSEM

by Mollie Murphy Tansem

Cliff was born in Anamoose, North Dakota, on July 4th, 1904. He came to Canada and the Peace River country from Dooley, Montana, the spring of 1918, with his dad, Ole Tansem, his stepmother Sadie, his brother Hjalmar and his sister Daphne.

My parents were Fred and Emma Murphy. I was born May 6th, 1911. I was named Mary Frances but I was glad my dad nicknamed me Mollie. My folks came from Tiny,



Clifford and Mollie Tansem - taken on their Wedding Day January 8, 1933.

Saskatchewan, to this Peace River country in April, 1917. My folks came west in 1906, from the Maritimes.

Cliff and I got married on January 8th, 1933. It was right in the middle of the big depression called the 'Hungry Thirties'. Times were really bad. We stayed at Cliff's dad's place at first. Cliff rented Martin and Alice Bode's land. We moved on there early in May. We only had \$75.00 left after Cliff bought a second hand cook stove and bed. We were lucky to get lots of household items for wedding gifts. Someone gave us half a moose, which I canned. I also dressed a pig. Father gave me a heifer, Cliff's dad gave us a good milk cow. Martin Bode gave us a heifer. Someone gave us some hens, too.

We worked very hard. Besides the farming, there were several cows to milk. Martin had left all the cattle, horses

and machinery there. We shipped cream and I sold butter, first at 15 cents a pound, then later at 25 cents. We sold currants and rhubarb. It all helped to buy groceries.

Cliff hired Dick Wells, who had quit school at 14. He could work as well as any man. His brother Delbert spent many weekends with us, and we had our own rodeos in the evenings with the boys trying to ride the big calves and steers. I was always so afraid they'd get hurt. They always got thrown off down in the stump patch. Cliff's dad and the neighbors always came to watch.

That first fall tragedy hit. Fred Nelson drowned in our dam. We were shook up for a long, long time.

Cliff managed to buy a second-hand John Deere tractor the second year we were farming. He went out breaking with it to make the payments on it. His brother Hjalmar ran the tractor one shift. They laughed often after breaking some land for a farmer several miles away. When it was bedtime they found to their dismay the whole family, including the old grandmother, slept in one long bed in a granary so they had to sleep on the end of it. They teased each other as to who'd have to sleep next to Grandma!

MOTHER OF INVENTION

Cliff rented more land down in the Belloy area. He hired three men that spring, young fellows. The first day they moved all the machinery down there, and I carried down food for dinner. When I got there I found there was no cook-stove in the small house. I was really in a bind. I found a huge, old wash-tub. It was busted down one seam which I bent back. I built a fire underneath it and soon had the potatoes, vegetables and meat bubbling merrily. No kitchen range ever worked better! I often wished I had a picture of my improvised stove, the up-



Left to Right: Olaf, Daphne, Gladys and friend.

side-down old tub and the amazed looks on the men's faces when they came in for dinner, which was right on time.

Our first crop, the fall of '33, brought heartbreak. The wheat was ready to cut and Cliff went to town for binder twine, but the dealer wouldn't let Cliff have it on time so he had to sell his accordion, his most prized possession. It was many years later before he got another one.

We got a small mantle radio the first winter, on time

payments. We got a lot of enjoyment out of it. To get the news and grain prices and the music was so special, but it did keep us scratching to make those monthly payments.

We couldn't afford to buy cases of fruit from the store those first tough years, so I picked all the berries I could. I found a big difference with the neighbors down in that area. They thought nothing of coming on our land and picking the berries. After coming home with empty pails several times, I got mad and thought if picking berries on your neighbor's land was the name of the game, I could play too! I used to walk miles up in the hills for raspberries and cranberries. Rhubarb was the good old reliable. We canned a lot of it or mixed it with berries. It made a good relish too. It was important to get all the jars full for the winter.

Martin Bode, the owner of the land, decided to have an auction sale in 1936, to sell all his machinery and cattle and horses. That was a sad day for us. We'd become attached to some of them. Cliff bid \$10.00 on the best milk cow, and was most amazed when no one raised his bid. I guess the crowd thought she wasn't a good cow



Mollie and Clifford with new cat.

when Cliff bid so little. Cliff was most happy to lead her back to the barn.

Cliff went to work on an elevator gang one fall when we had a very poor crop. Another winter he went hacking ties at a camp south of Faust. He'd hacked ties many years before we were married. He laughed after about his first night in camp. A short, husky, Frenchman hefted Cliff's broad-axe and said sneeringly, 'Good axe for school boy.' When Cliff got toughened in he topped everyone in camp in the number of ties he hacked every day. It was awful for me being alone, with a lot of chores to do. It was winter time and very cold. I had a very close call one night. I went down to the barn to feed up the stock for the night, carrying the coal oil lantern. I opened the big barn door and let down the ladder to the loft which was just inside. I went up the ladder carrying the lantern, then placed it to one side. I forked down some hay and sheaves, then picked up the lantern and started back down the ladder. Part way down, the lantern slipped out of my hand and fell right on top of a pile of hay! Luckily when it flipped over it went out. If it hadn't, I could never have put the fire out. I don't know how I managed to light the lantern, feed the horses and cattle,

then go back to the house. I was still so scared I couldn't sleep for many nights. I was so glad when Cliff came home.

The prices for grain those first several years were very poor. I remember one year we had a very good oat crop, but the price was only two and a half cents a bushel! Some years it was too dry and some, an early frost hit. One year we had two feet of snow in mid-September. We lost a lot of crop, especially a good crop of barley. The snow went away but no one could get in the fields.

We were getting ahead slowly, but it was hard to realize that. Cliff traded the old John Deere tractor in on a newer second-hand model, and rented Charlie Geller's land. The men ran it day and night that spring, to get all the crop in.

In the early '40's Cliff went in partnership with a neighbor in a logging and lumber project. They got a timber berth up in the hills. They hired the Rutherford brothers sawmill. This was mostly a winter project. They sold a lot of lumber.

In early February, 1943, we were so shocked and saddened when Cliff's dad, Ole Tansem, passed away suddenly at home. We missed him terribly. We tried to hire a man to do the chores there, but all the good lads had gone to war. Ole had a big bunch of little pigs arrive and there was other stock, too, so I had to move over there. Cliff was busy at the mill. I worked very hard carrying water and feed for ninety pigs. I was glad when the mill work ended in the spring and Cliff moved over, too. He bought out his brother and sister's share of his dad's estate, so we then owned the land and stayed there. A couple of years later Cliff sold the John Deere tractor and bought a TD6 International Caterpillar tractor with a blade. He went out clearing and brushing land, digging dugouts, and basements, and farmed with it too. A few years later he sold it and bought a bigger caterpillar. There was more work with the bigger one, so Cliff made good money with it.



Clifford and Mollie in Model T Ford.

FIRST CAR

Our first car was an old Model-T Ford. Cliff bought it for \$35.00 from Hermel Girard. Jim Rutherford got it going for us. It had no hood and no fenders. The upholstery was all gone, so we filled some grain sacks with straw to sit on. If the road was muddy, chunks of

mud would come flying up and land in our laps! We had a lot of fun and laughs with it, and it did save us a lot of walking. We were able to get up to the folks more often. We got our first new car the fall of 1947, a Plymouth. We took a long trip down through the States with it that same winter. In later years we had Chrysler cars. The last one was a 1963 model, a real special car to us.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE BACHELORS

Mother and Father had started the special tradition of inviting the bachelors for Christmas dinners in 1917. It was always roast goose. The first Christmas at the Murphy's was in a tiny shack on Malanders, the land Father had rented. There was Martin and Emil Bode, Cornelius Olsen and Hans Mortensen. In 1918 Charlie Geller joined the group. He came to the area after the war ended, and was a special neighbor and friend for many years to come. In 1919 we moved up to our own land, and the Christmas group became larger with all our new bachelor neighbors. In 1940 Cliff and I took over the 'Murphy tradition' of Christmas with the bachelors. With all our new friends it was a big group. One year I had to roast four big turkeys! There were always unexpected guests which were welcome. There was always card playing and music. My brother, Jim, always had his fiddle along and Cliff, his new button accordion, and Paul Leriger had his guitar, so there were sing songs and dancing, too, in the evening. Jim was gone overseas in the army for five years and we sure missed him and his music; he played old time fiddle, like Don Messer. We were so glad when he got back safe and sound, and to hear his good music again.

It became a combine country, but we missed the threshing time, even though it was a very busy time and I worked early and late, cooking for the big crews. There were always extras, friends and men dropping in, as they said 'to see how the grain was running'. They always came at mealtime, it seemed.



Roman Catholic group gathered for Confirmation at the Ed Prevost farm in 1925. Front Row: Octave Prevost, Leo Prevost, Ed Prevost Sr., Cecile Prevost, Bishop Grouard, Reverend Girard, Jim Murphy, Barry Murphy, Adolph Fortier and Alfred Fortier. Back Row: Camile Prevost, Yvonne Prevost, Beatrice Bolduc, Kathleen Murphy, Jean Socquet, Francis Fortier, Mrs. Bolduc, Mollie Murphy, Mrs. E. Murphy, Yvonne Socquet, Mr. Bolduc, Delima Fortier, Sam Rouleau, Jr., and Mrs. E. Prevost.

Some years we had good crops. Then there were years when early frost hit; dry years, so we had poor crops and poor grades for it. The worst year was in 1956, when a terrific hail storm hit and came on the right slant from the south-east to wipe out all our crops, even though our land was scattered. It was awful. The hail was bigger than marbles! It only took five minutes to ruin our whole crop. We didn't have any crop left. This was not a hail country up 'till then. We didn't have any insurance. The following year we were partly hailed out again. Those two years were the worst of our farming years. I went to work in the cafe full-time, after the big hail storm in 1956. Later Cliff went to work on the road in the winter, brushing. He only worked a month and hurt his arm, so had to quit.



Vera Sandercock, Mollie and Clifford Tansem, Mr. Yerza and Charles Geller.

Cliff sold his caterpillar tractor with a snow plow, and brush cutter blade, and kept one tractor to farm our land. Cliff's health wasn't too good. He spent seventy three days in the hospital in Edmonton. He finally had surgery. We sold the land, but we kept six acres and we lived there till 1965. We moved to town and retired. We built an addition on the house to get the plumbing in in 1968. Cliff became diabetic and later lost his speech. That was a terrible thing for poor Cliff. He had his leg amputated in early 1973. He passed away in December, 1973. He was 69 years old.

I look back across the years and realize those first tough depression years, when we had to work so hard to try and get ahead, were the happiest years of our lives, even though we didn't know it then. We had our health, the most special gift of all. This I know now.

HJALMAR AND LAURA TANSEM

Hjalmar Tansem was born in Manford, North Dakota in 1900. He came to the Wanham area in 1918 with his father, Olaf, step-mother, Sarah, brother, Clifford, and sister, Daphne.

Hjalmar married Laura Bolduc, who was born on January 15, 1910, in the Wanham area. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Bolduc who came to live in the Belloy area in 1916. Belloy was then known as Grizzly Bear.



Back Row: Hjalmer, Clifford, David, Blanche, and Clarence. Front Row: Laura holding Gordon, Mollie Tansem.

Hjalmar and Laura were married in Grande Prairie at Christ Church on November 26, 1921. Their first son, Marshall Ray, was born in 1922, but lived only a few hours so the first year of their marriage was touched by grief.

They moved to Dimsdale in the mid-twenties to find work. Work in those days was hard and gruelling. Hjalmar milked many cows and Laura made huge quantities of butter to sell in Grande Prairie for additional money.

do the various other chores before retiring to bed.

Hjalmar and Laura had their fifth child on July 12, 1939, but Marshall Bruce passed away when he was only 18 months old. After this incident, the family moved into Wanham and operated a Dray Line business for a few years.



Laura and her horses on the home farm.



Hjalmar and Laura's house on farm in Wanham Belloy area October 1959.

Hjalmar and Laura moved back to their homestead in the Wanham/Belloy area in 1931. They had three children: David, Clarence and Blanche.

Hjalmar owned a quarter of land which was their home quarter and with the quarter Laura owned, north of the homestead, they farmed a total half-section. Hjalmar supplemented his farming income with custom sowing and operating a threshing machine for George MacDonald.

Hjalmar was a lover of horses and a great horseman. He and Laura spent many hours riding. This was their transportation to many of the dances. They would get home in the early morning in time to milk the cows and



Hjalmar and Laura in the homestead days.

David, Clarence, and Blanche in their young years.

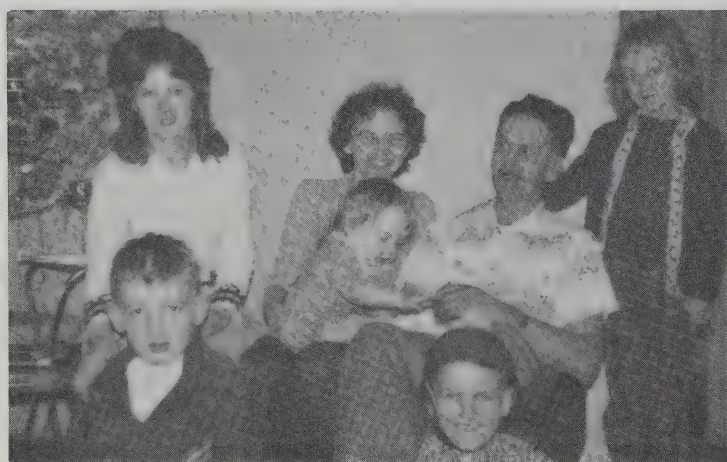


Gordon Clifford was born March 31, 1943, and the family moved back to the farm where they resided until Hjalmar's death on April 21, 1951.

Laura married Sam Kenny and they weren't married a year when Sam was killed in a combine accident. After



Back Row: Dave, Brian, Robert, Garry, Dwayne, Karen, Jean, Bonnie, and Koreen June 8, 1974.



Audrey, Mary holding Peggy, Clarence, Cathy Roy and Andy taken Christmas 1962.

this terrible accident, Laura and her youngest child, Gordon, moved back into Wanham where she had a small Bake Shop and Tea Room.

After a few years in business, they moved back to the farm where they resided until Laura passed away in October, 1955.

Laura never lived to see her Senior Citizen Award (Golden Jubilee) for her years 1905 - 1955, which was handed out shortly after her death.



Gordon and Pearl on their Wedding Day Aug. 27, 1966.

David Tansem - David served in the Canadian Air Force where he met his future wife who also was serving in the Air Force. David and Jean Smailles were married in Edmonton on March 4, 1947. They moved to Wanham in that year where they took up farming and raised their seven children: Robert, Bonnie, Garry, Brian, Dwayne, and the twins, Koreen and Karen.

Clarence Tansem - Clarence was a member of the Canadian Army. He married Mary McDaid on February 10, 1950. They had five children: Audrey, Roy, Andy, Cathy and Peggy Lynne.

Blanche Tansem - Blanche married Victor Weigel on November 14, 1946. They had four children: Alvin, David, Marjorie and Barry.

Gordon Tansem - Gordon married Pearl Webb. They have two children: Tammy and Chris.

PETER AND MINNIE TANSEM AND FAMILY

by Art Tansem

In the spring of 1916, Peter Tansem decided to go to the Peace River Country and file on a homestead in Alberta. At that time, the Edmonton-Dunvegan Railroad had been built as far as Grande Prairie. He travelled as far as Spirit River and, with the help of St. Pierre Ferguson as guide, travelled to the Heart Valley and Wanham area to look at land. He finally decided to file on a quarter section of land in Wanham on the east side of where the Village of Wanham is now situated. He then returned to Ambrose, North Dakota to plan and prepare to move the family to sunny Alberta.

Peter, his wife, Minnie, and their four children: Arthur, 11; Vera, 9; Ray, 7; and Gladys, 4 years old, arrived in Wanham July 7, 1917. Ludwig, Peter's brother, travelled with them and later filed on a homestead in the area.

That summer, the family lived in a tent set up under the poplar trees. A stove was set up outside the tent and there, amongst the mosquitoes, black flies and yellow jackets, Minnie cooked the meals. The settler's effects, second-hand machinery and furniture arrived about two weeks later. Dad had forty-five dollars in his money



Art, Gladys, Vera, Raymond, Peter, Wallace, LeRoy, and Minnie taken in early 30's.

pouch on arrival. He bought a garden from a neighbour, Eli Barrett, who was going out to work in a logging camp in the area and would not need the garden. Therefore, we had plenty of vegetables through the summer.

Dad and Uncle Louis cut logs and Pete Anderson built a log house, 22' by 24' with an upstairs. By fall, we were pretty well established in our new home. This was paid for by some of the second-hand machinery Dad had brought with him from the States.

We did our shopping for groceries in Spirit River, about 24 miles west of Wanham. We had to travel by train which puffed its way through the area about once a week, when it was on schedule. Sometimes we had to wait 24 hours for the train. The bachelors and some families in the area came to Mother for supplies such as tea, coffee, sugar, flour, bacon, etc. and soon she had several steady customers buying supplies.

In the fall of 1917, a sawmill moved into the Birch Hills south of Belloy. Rod McCrimmon, the owner, hired Dad to operate the steam engine, for which Dad had 1st Class papers. This mill operated in the area for several years and many of the homesteaders worked in the mill.

In the fall of 1917, we went to school in the Eli Barrett log cabin. Jim, Barry and Kathleen Murphy; Vera, Ray and myself; Art, Bert and Carl Grey; received their education from Mrs. Blanche Cameron, the teacher. As there were only eight children in Wanham to attend, Ira Gilmour from Belloy rode horseback each day to make up the number of children needed to have a teacher in the area. The families and bachelors in the area held a picnic and cleared an area to build the South Slope School, where the area children attended school for many years.

In 1919, Dad built a grocery store and several years later, the Post Office was also housed in the same building. Dad had had a store and post office in Ambrose, North Dakota before we moved to Wanham.

Some Indians, camped near the Birch Hills, needed some supplies and they traded Mother some moose meat for them. This was our first taste of moose meat and we



Gladys on horse, Art, Minnie, Vera and Peter in front of first store in Wanham.

all enjoyed it, although we had plenty of it in the years to follow.

In winter we played for dances at Prestville and Rycroft and for house parties. Laurence Leriger, Sr. drove us there by team and sleigh. Dad and Louis played the violin, Mother played the mandolin and I played the drums. They all enjoyed this as they asked us to come back often.

I remember during the flu epidemic, the Government allowed the homesteader a grant of \$500.00 for cattle. Dad applied and, in the fall, was notified the cattle were at Swamp Creek at Rycroft. Everyone at home had the flu except Mother and I. Therefore, I was elected to go for the cattle with a neighbour, Bert Reid, who also had cattle to pick up. Bert lived about 2 1/2 miles west of us.

It had snowed during the night and I got my feet wet walking to Bert's farm. Bert hooked up his team of mules to the wagon and we were on our way. Bill Cavanaugh, a neighbour, went with us to help drive the cattle.

We arrived late in the afternoon, had supper at Oscar Park's home and started back shortly after. I was driving the mule team as I was feeling very sick by now. When I got across the Burnt River, I tied the reins to the wagon and rolled up in some horse blankets and let the team find their own way home. When Bert and Bill got home, they decided to take Dad's cattle home the next day. When we got the cattle home and in the barn, I headed for upstairs and bed where I stayed for a week with the flu. Surprisingly, Mother nursed us all back to good health. She



Minnie, Louis, Art and LeRoy, 1925.

had all the chores to do by herself.

Many people died from the flu; people passing through the area and looking for land to homestead. No one knew who they were or where they came from as they had no identification on their person.

In 1920, Dad and Louis bought a threshing machine with a water-cooled stationary engine which had a fly wheel about as high as a man. In order to start it, you had to use your foot and both hands to turn it over. It usually started easily but, when it didn't, the air was blue with Norwegian cuss words. This separator was hand-fed by one man cutting the twine, one feeding the grain into the machine and one keeping the straw away from the back of the machine. I remember we threshed 500 bushels of wheat for Uncle Louis. We were cleaning up around the machine, getting ready to move to another location, when the straw pile caught fire. We barely pulled the machine away to safety, but the grain and granary were burned to the ground.

In 1924, December 2, Leroy was born. There was no District Nurse in Wanham at that time so Mrs. Emma Murphy delivered the baby. About two weeks later, Miss Kate Brighty, the first District Nurse, arrived in the area.

Wallace, my youngest brother, was born in August, 1927. That made a family of six children.

In the early 30's, Art married Rose Rondeau. Vera married Alex Sandercock; Ray married Ida Sather; Leroy married Margaret Boetcher; Gladys married Lorne Haralson and Wally married Doris Williams.



Sharon Quamme, Maxine Quamme, Marlene and Lyle Tansem.

PETER TANSEM

Grande Prairie Herald Tribune, December 17, 1964:

Wanham (Special) - A final tribute has been paid to the pioneer who, single handedly, brought much modern progress to this village of about 300 persons.

Peter Marcus Tansem, homesteader, merchant, postmaster and district patriarch, was buried in Belloy cemetery on the weekend.

One of the 'originals' of the Central Peace District, Mr. Tansem came to the Wanham area July 12, 1917. He homesteaded the quarter section that later contained half of the Wanham townsite - the port of the community's main street.

Peter Tansem was born in Tansem Township, Clay County, Minnesota, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Tansem.

After his arrival in the north, in addition to his homestead effort, Mr. Tansem single-handedly created much of the early business section of Wanham. He operated the town's first grocery store and butcher shop and also was the community's first postmaster, a role he filled for many years.

Later, Mr. Tansem ran the tiny generating plant that provided the town with it's first electric lights.

In recent years, after his retirement, Mr. Tansem had lived in the Grande Prairie Auxiliary Hospital. He died there December 8, at the age of 82.

The Wanham oldtimer was the father of six children, four sons and two daughters. Surviving are sons Arthur and Wallace at Wanham; Raymond, in Dawson Creek; and LeRoy, in Edmonton. Mrs. Gladys Harelson of Dawson Creek is a surviving daughter.

Mr. Tansem's wife, Minnie, predeceased him in 1950. A daughter, Vera, died June 12 of this year, (1964) and a brother, Ole, died in 1943.

Still living are two brothers and one sister of the Wanham oldtimer: Brother Louis Tansem at the Auxiliary Hospital, Grande Prairie; Edwin Tansem at Barnsville, Minnesota; and sister Tillie in Florida.

Pallbearers were longtime neighbors of Mr. Tansem: Jack McLean of Grande Prairie, and E.J. Harrington, Norman McDonald, Cornelius Olsen, Walter Stepaniuk and Nels Jacobsen all of Wanham.

ART TANSEM

by Dora Tansem

After I proved up my homestead in Peoria, I sold the land to George Reiswig and moved to Wanham.

In 1938, the NAR Bridge and Building Crew were stationed at Wanham and were in need of a cook. They asked Vera (Tansem) Sandercock at the store if she could recommend someone.

"Oh, sure," she said. "My brother Art is a good cook."

So I got the job. I could cook for myself, but when it came to cooking and baking for a crew of 18 to 20 men, I wasn't sure I could handle it. Since I had to bake bread, I asked my mother for her recipe. Along with it she added this advice, "If you get the dough too soft to handle, add a little more flour. And if the dough is too firm, add more water."

So I baked bread but I ran into a problem. When the dough was just right, I had enough bread for the whole country.

Once, when I baked baking powder biscuits, there were quite a few left over and we were moving to a new location down the line. Some kids watching the train go by asked for some cookies and I gave them the biscuits. It wasn't long and they were throwing them back at me. I could hear them hitting the sides of the box cars. I stayed with the NAR Bridge and Building Crew until 1946.

In 1946 I built a small novelty store and Beauty Parlor. Dora looked after the shop while I did odd jobs of carpenter work around the area. Wages were low so I decided to go farming again. We sold the store to Clara Hauser for an Imperial Oil Office. The stock on hand was sold to A.O. Fimrite who operated the General Store at that time.

In 1949 I applied for a homestead 4 1/2 miles southwest of Wanham.

In 1977 I sold the farm and retired. We now live in Wanham where I do a little gardening and carpenter work of small novelty articles.

DORA TANSEM

My visit to Wanham, Alberta in 1929 was a very enjoyable one. I arrived in June and was met by my sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Hauser, her husband, Joe, and their children, Clara and Ben. Joe was the Imperial Oil agent in Wanham and would take us to the homestead, 4 miles east and two miles south, that evening. I was given a tour of Wanham and was introduced to many of the people living there.

A few weeks after I arrived a Sports day was held where baseball games, horse racing and various sports for the children - sack racing, three-legged race, potato race - were on the agenda.

The Beef Barbecue was the highlight of this occasion. Pete Tansem and Newt Ferguson were in charge of the pit fire over which a whole beef was slowly rotated for many hours. Many people attended from the small communities, south, east, and west, and from Dawson Creek, B.C. and Grande Prairie areas. After the delicious beef

supper, a dance was held in the community hall.

At this time I met many of the young people in the area: Molly Murphy, Oughna Harrington, Gladys Tansem, Jean Cameron, Edna Butler, Lola Swartz, Hazel Wells, Myrtle Rolston, Ed and Mildred Harrington, Hazel and Ernie Trump, Art, Sam and Arnie Ramsfield, Art and Ray Tansem, Cliff Tansem, Ollie Pickard, Cyril Harrington, Ed Prevost, Billy Brown, Nels Jacobsen and Charlie Hansen. Charlie Hansen painted beautiful flowers on silk scarves and handkerchiefs. I still have a silk handkerchief he gave me as a remembrance when I left Wanham the next year.



Art and Dora's 25th Wedding Anniversary.

The people here were very friendly and, soon, I was included in all the parties and dances held. Mostly I stayed with Gladys Tansem after a party or dance. Sometimes I went home with Bill and Nellie Trumpower, who lived half a mile from Hausers.

The people in the community made their own fun. It seems the men took turns to do the janitor work, lighting fires and lamps for the dances. There was very little money spent as the ladies brought the lunches for the dance and the men paid 25¢ each. Music was donated: Mrs. Marie McLean played the piano, Arnie Ramsfield, the guitar, Ed Prevost, the violin, and Art Tansem, the drums.

Whist Drives, Bunko, Box Socials, Pie Socials, Hard Time Dances and House Parties were held.

Soon, it was time for me to leave and return to B.C. but I returned several times in the '30s to visit and renew old acquaintances and friends.

In 1941, I returned to make my home in Wanham. As the Army had a training camp on Mission Hill in my home town for enlisted men during the war, the house I rented while my husband, Ed Quamme, was overseas was sold. It was impossible to find a room, apartment or house vacant. My sister finally persuaded me to move to Wanham. As Ed was interested in farming, we decided it would be the best move. Therefore, the children, Maxine and Sharon, and I moved to Wanham. Later Ed was killed overseas.

In December, 1945, Art Tansem and I were married and lived in this area and finally retired here.

Maxine and Sharon attended school in Wanham. They walked two and a half miles to and from school. Maxine worked in the bank in Grande Prairie after she graduated.

Sharon married Taras Zamorsky and they have five children; Tara, Heather, Douglas, David and Terry. Tara is now married to Terry Foote; they have two children, Rhonda and Harmony. Heather is married to Garry Tansem.

Maxine married Stanley McCrae and lives on Vancouver Island.

Art and I are retired and are enjoying our grand children and great grand children.



Dora, Maxine and Sharon taken in 1942.



Four Generations. Dora Tansem, Tara Foote holding Rhonda and Sharon Zamorsky.

Stan and Maxine McCrae.



Great-grandchildren: Rhonda and Harmony.



Sharon, Tara, Taras, Heather, Douglas, David, and Terry Zamorsky.



Dora and Art Tansem's Wedding Dec. 20, 1945 with Reverend G. Hutchinson.



LOUIS C. TANSEM

Dec. 18, 1956
The Herald Tribune, Staff

The tiny shack rocked with heat and reverberated with the sound of ticking clocks.

The old man gazed into space, his eyes occasionally clouding over as his sciatica gave a devilish twinge.

"No use kiddin' anyone," said Louis C. Tansem, "guess I ain't as young as I used to be ... but then, who is?"

The question was rhetorical. Even if Louis had the chance to be young again, he wouldn't take it. So he says.

To most people in the Wanham area, Mr. Tansem and his brother Peter are known as two of the original settlers. Peter, for instance, homesteaded on what is now the townsite, and, while Louis 'moved a piece out,' his little watchmakers store was well known in the days of yesteryear.

Louis Tansem, seventy-nine this year, is something of an enigma.

A bachelor all his life, he homesteaded once in his native Minnesota, and twice in the Peace River country - yet his faith in farming has never been secure.

This weakness, for such he figures it to be, manifested itself very early in his life. Although the son of a fairly prosperous farmer, and a homesteader in his own rights when a lad of twenty-two, he spent his winters 'taking a business course at college.'

Lack of money, circumvented completion of this course, and, in a round about way, forced Louis to stay with the land. A bumper crop in Dakota around the nineteen-hundreds, he says, was twenty to twenty-five bushels an acre, not enough to live on - not quite little enough to starve on.

When things got worse, Mr. Tansem decided to find another way of life.

He visited the city, and, after deciding that a mechanic's job was too dirty, he apprenticed himself to a watchmaker and jeweller. He learned his trade, ('didn't have enough money to go through with the optics course') and opened a shop.

About this time, the year 1916, he thinks, brother Peter had just returned from a trip into the Peace River country, and was full of tales about the rich farming land he saw. Peter turned out to be a most convincing salesman. The following year, Louis tagged along behind Peter, and his wife and family, and in this manner arrived at what is now called Wanham.

"Unfortunately," said Louis, "I arrived broke ... at least as good as. The travellers cheques I had weren't no good. Anyhow, I borrowed some money, filed on the homestead, and then went watchmaking in Spirit River for the winter." Eventually, Louis's money arrived from the U.S., a fact which permitted him to continue 'proving up' during the summers, and earn for himself the title of farmer. By 1921, his homestead was in good condition, but the one thing that stands out in Mr. Tansem's mind was the hard work necessary to make it so.

"I knew then," he said, painfully straightening his leg, "that I should've stuck to my trade. Never was much of a man with a grub axe. I guess I was twenty-five years too



Louis Tansem in his shack of many clocks.

early. Now if'n we'd had bulldozers and tractors in them days, why I'd reckon I'd liked it fine."

Mr. Tansem meant every word he uttered. But in spite of his apparent dislike for the chore of homesteading, in those days after proving up his original farm, he moved to Fox Creek and started all over again.

He looked over the top of his glasses and grinned shyly. "Kinda hard to figure, ain't I?" he questioned. "Well, after I'd proved that one I sold it too, and went back to serious watch repairing."

In point of history, the store Louis built was one of the first to be seen in Wanham. He sold hardware from the front end of it, and did his watch making in the rear.

"Built it myself," he said, "just like I did this shack. Carried on with my trade till '40, then quit. At sixty-three, a man's hands ain't so steady."

One of Mr. Tansem's regrets is that he didn't open a watch repair shop in Grande Prairie, when he had the chance.

"Big mistake," he said leaving his chair to walk slowly over to his work bench. "Lot of good stuff here yet," he said, undoing box after box of delicate instruments and watch parts. "Would have been much better off by now," he added, "but then ..."

LUDWIG TANSEM

by Dora Tansem

In July, 1917, Louis Tansem came to Wanham with his brother Peter. He took a homestead in the area and lived here for many years. He had a hardware store connected to Peter Tansem's grocery store. In the fall and winter in the twenties he had a small jewellery store in Spirit River for a few years. Mostly he lived in Wanham.

Louis was a bachelor all his life. He had a little cabin where people brought their watches and clocks for repair. The tick-tock of all the clocks repaired was fascinating, when you entered the cabin, as they all ticked in unison and all were set at the same time.

GARDEN GONE

I remember he planted a garden, a little patch cleared

in the bush not far from his cabin. Shortly after planting the seed he decided there were too many weeds so he hoed the garden but forgot his glasses at home. "I don't know what happened to my garden. I planted radishes, beets, corn, peas and carrots and they don't seem to be coming." We found out later, without the glasses he couldn't see the small plants and hoed them all out.

GOOD COLD

One Christmas Eve, Louis, Jim Munroe and Roy Liverington (his buddies) cooked some 'Lute Fiske', a Norwegian dish usually served at Christmas time. They'd had a few drinks and were ready to enjoy this special treat. They looked all over the cabin and when they couldn't find it they took the flashlight and went outside to see if they had thrown it out - nowhere to be found. So they decided to have another beer. Next morning they found the kettle on the back of the wood stove (set back to cool). They hadn't looked into this kettle but enjoyed the Lute Fiske later that day.

LUCKY

Louis had a dog named "Lucky", who followed him wherever he went. One day Louis got a little enebriated and on the way home had to go through a barbed wire fence or go a short distance around to the gate. He decided he'd try the fence but got his jacket caught on the barbs and couldn't get loose. Lucky was trying to help by barking to attract attention, and every time Louis got up and tried to loose the coat, Lucky was so happy he jumped at him and knocked him down again. We finally heard the dog barking and knew Louis was having trouble. We found Louis cussing the dog, but got him home safely.

JUST WAIT

Vera and Daphne Tansem cleaned Louis' shack for him when they knew he'd be away for a few hours. Louis claimed he couldn't find anything after they had put things in order. He always promised he'd leave them everything he owned in his will. Then he would get mad at them for some disagreement and then he'd say he'd leave it to Ida. This would go on from time to time. He didn't leave it to either of them.



Louis and Art Tansem in shop.



Bamford Teed - Springhill, Nova Scotia - 1904.

THE TEED FAMILY

by Christine (Teed) Rexine

In 1910, Bamford walked all the way from Edmonton to Grande Prairie over the Edson Trail and was the first sawyer for Harry Ardair's sawmill. He walked out again in 1912, and moved back to Peoria in 1936. In 1937, another move to Heart Valley.

In 1949 we moved to the Smoky River area, 18 miles southeast of Belloy, to the place where Alvin Littman now lives. In June 23, 1950, I got my leg broken on that place, digging a basement for a house. Dave Littman moved the house on to this place July 23, 1950, and on the 24th it burned down. We lost everything. I had only one shoe and the clothes we had on. The neighbors, with Clarence Rude the head carpenter, built the house.

Teddy, our big collie, took rabies in 1953. We had to destroy him, with Eileen screaming, "My Teddy! My Teddy!". We also lost a nice big steer with rabies.

We sold the place to Alvin Littman in the spring of 1955 and moved to Peoria. We bought a house from Keith Best, just north of John Krenzler's place. We moved to Grande Prairie in the fall of 1958 and took care of retarded children. Bamford passed away in 1959. In 1961 I moved to B.C. and have remained here since.



Christine Teed and Rex.



Vern - 6 years old.

THE TOFTNER FAMILY

by L. Toftner

Leaving the state of North Dakota approximately the sixth of June, 1920, Mother, Father and I travelled by train to the Peace River country. The journey by train from Edmonton to Spirit River took 61 hours of continuous travelling. The train was scheduled at eight miles an hour, and then at times was two days late. If you stood on the track and looked at the rails, you would have known why.

Often the cars would drop so low that the draw heads would uncouple and they would have to back up and pick up the rest of the train. The crew carried equipment with them at all times to put the cars back on the tracks should they become derailed. There was little or no gravel under the railway ties to hold them up or in place.

Around Lesser Slave Lake (June 10) it began to snow, and by the time we reached Spirit River (June 12), there was six inches of soft wet snow on the railroad coaches and twelve inches of snow on the ground. There would be no train back for three weeks, as a section of the railroad track was washed out on the banks of the Smoky River, in the vicinity of what is now Watino.



First winter on the homestead - 1920.

Of necessity, (we had the whole sum of \$80.00 when we arrived at Spirit River) Dad and I found work on a government road gang. Mother found employment at the old Grande Prairie Hospital as a cook. Having had experience cooking in hospitals in the States and being a good cook, she was used to this kind of work. At that time, the entire staff of the hospital was a matron, one nurse and the cook. Their pressure water system had to be pumped up with a hand pump connected to a large metal tank. There was no janitor, and pumping up the water pressure was hard work. I know because I pumped it up for them whenever I visited my mother, which was not very often. The matron, nurse and the cook took turns pumping up the pressure. It took about half an hour to get it high enough to do for a day.

After leaving the road gang, my father and I found work with a Telephone Construction gang, working west of Sexsmith. The train service had been restored, but by now we had decided to stay and find homesteads.

We walked with packs on our backs for 400 miles,



L.O. (O.L. ?) Toftner's truck and the men who went to the Monkman Pass. Left to Right: Fred Bohnke, Lester Olsen, O.L. Toftner, Irving Reiswig, Mr. Mosley, Pete Reiswig, Wilfred Reiswig, W.J. Rottacker, Jake Berg, Dan Reiswig, Fred Reiswig in front. Russell Reiswig, Art Ziprick and Orville Berg on top of cab.

looking at each place from corner to corner before deciding to settle on a strip of burnt timber land in Peoria. This was south of Grizzly Bear, as Belloy was then known. Call it what you will, but I bought my first saddle horse after walking all those miles.

There was nothing that you could call a wagon road to our homestead at that time, only a logging road part of the way and a narrow trail the rest of the way.

We filed on our homesteads on August 30, 1920, and bet the government \$10.00 that we would not starve to death before we could prove it up and get title to 160 acres of land, in all - 320 acres of fire-killed heavy timber land. Then we went to our Telephone Contruction job and worked there 'till the ground froze deep enough so it was impossible to continue. We were sorry to stop working as we were acquiring funds to start on the homestead next spring.

In the spring of 1921, we settled on our homesteads with a borrowed wagon and three ponies.

Starting to farm was a slow process. Clearing land was done in a primitive way at that time, and there was no other way. For about ten years until the fire-killed trees began to rot at the roots, we worked whenever jobs were available, and in spare time between jobs, we whittled away at the big trees on our homesteads. Each spring, we would fire guard the few buildings in the area and allow a fire to go through the clearing, to keep young trees from starting and to burn the trees blown over by the wind. This way, we kept gaining slowly on the clearing operation.

Our first small field of wheat (8 acres) yielded 60 bushels per acre, and the next year on the same 8 acres, we threshed 55 bushels of wheat per acre, proving that the land was productive.

The depression struck early in the Peace River country. The winter of 1921, practically all work ceased, and making a living became difficult. However our gardens yielded bountifully and moose and deer were available, so we never lacked the necessities of life. But I must admit there were times when we did not know where our next sack of flour was coming from. It seemed that 'king

providence' always supplied when the need was greatest.

It took several years to get started farming, but the day finally came when we threshed our first crop with a hand-fed threshing machine. Roads were nearly impassable at times, and one time, our closest neighbor was eight miles away.

We lived in a tent for nearly a year after coming to our homesteads in the spring of 1921. Mother came home from her cooking job in the summer months, and returned there for the winter, 'till we got better established.

Mother was truly a pioneer woman, at times remaining alone at home in the tent, and at one time for nearly a week. Wild animals were everywhere in that area in the early years of settlement.

As the years went by, more settlers came in and Peoria became a productive and prosperous community. Schools, churches and places of business were built and established.

The first settlers of the Peoria District are now either retired or have gone to their rest. All signs of the depression and a struggle for existence are gone. The old buildings have given away to modern homes and conveniences. Some of the old-timers walk over the fertile fields trying to find a place where the old house and barn used to be. Perhaps a little sadly, they realize that these things have to be. Progress demands it.

In November, 1928, Hattie Ziprick and her sisters, Margaret and Emma arrived in what is known as Peoria. Hattie assisted Mrs. Cole, the district nurse whenever she was called in Peoria, and also in Heart Valley for some time, then went to work in the hospital that replaced the old one.

In 1931, Hattie Ziprick and I were married. We have two sons. Lawrence *Merle*, who owns and operates a large farm in Peoria. He and his family live on what was our homestead. He also owns Grandpa Toftner's original homestead, and several other quarters of land.

Our youngest son, *James* Woodrow, is one of the administrators in a hospital in Pendleton, Oregon. James has three girls approaching teen age, and Merle has three children - one son and two daughters. So you see, we are not quite extinct!



Merle Toftner and Audrey Taylor (early school teacher).

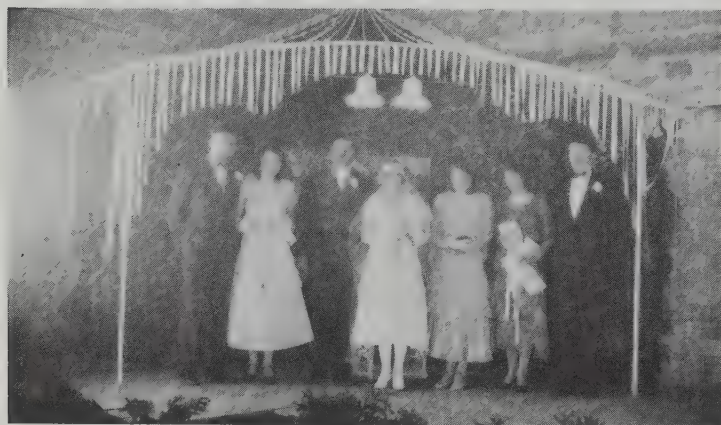
Now a second generation operates larger farms in Peoria with very modern equipment, and if they measure up to what it takes in a modern world, they have a standard of living that we never dreamed of in the early days. Perhaps, we were born 40 years too soon!

At one time when our provisions were as low as they could get and, as the old saying goes, 'the wolf was looking in at the back door,' we captured some bear cubs and eventually sold them to a zoo in Minneapolis, Minnesota. We received \$100.00 for them. This amount had to be divided in three parts between Mr. Walter Nash, my father and I. One hundred dollars in those days was a king's ransom and we were safe, financially, for quite some time. We waited for two days and nights for Mama Bear to come in and protect her cubs, but she did not come, although we could hear her thrashing around in the bush out of sight. It was finally decided that I was to crawl into the den and bring the cubs out, while my father and Mr. Nash stood guard, rifles cocked and ready for action. My only defense, otherwise, was a .38 calibre revolver, which would have been about as effective as a bean-shooter against an angry Mama Bear. I recall thinking that, as I crawled into the den. However, the mother bear out-guessed us, and did not come near enough so the marksmen could demonstrate how protective they could be. We caught her in a trap the next night. We kept the cubs for about six weeks 'till all the arrangements were made to send them to Minneapolis. There were no restrictions at that time. I hope the cubs grew up in the zoo, and delighted the children that came to see them, and that the children had many goodies to feed them in their captivity.

Although our parents have gone the way of all pioneers, and we regret that they were unable to see the progress of this fair land, the Toftner family still numbers 12, for which we are sincerely thankful. We never did anything spectacular, but we lived, and were happy.

We express our gratitude to the good Peace River country, and the many fine neighbors we associated and worked with, through all those good years. Some experiences can neither be bought nor sold, and we who experienced them would not trade them, even if we could, for any sum.

We are humbly proud, if there is such a thing, of the privilege of being pioneers of a community that has progressed beyond our fondest dreams.



Lawrence and Hattie Toftner's wedding. Left to Right: John Neufeld, Margaret Ziprick, Lawrence and Hattie, Emma Ziprick, Lily Green and Eric Ziprick.

ALF TRACY

The first time I went to Wanham from Edmonton was in 1928, when I was eleven years old. Ray Tansem was on the dray from the station to the post office at the time.

I was on my way to West Vale to visit my brothers Ed and George on their homesteads. I spent my holidays helping them 'till I was seventeen, when I went on my own in Heart Valley. Gordon Edey helped me get out jack pine logs for my buildings. Jack Funk helped me groove and dovetail the logs for cabin and barn.

I married Leila DeLisle in '37, and we had three boys.

Times were hard for us in the thirties. Leila and I can remember cleaning wheat on our table to grind for cereal. Moose meat was also very important.

Enclosed is a snap of Roy Prosser and myself. Get a load of my spats!

We lived a number of years at Woking and now at Whonnock, B.C., since 1965.

THE TRACYS

by Mabel Funk Tracy

Mr. Parlee, Sr. and Dave Funk, my father, on their way home from the Peace River country visited the Tracy family in Edmonton. Mr. Parlee had been Mr. Tracy's teacher back in New Brunswick. The Tracy boys listened to the glowing tales of the Peace River country and decided that farming was the career for them.

George and Ed Tracy, two teenage city boys, decided to go farming and arrived in Wanham in 1929. Needless to say they knew nothing about farming. They took homesteads in the West Vale District and learned to farm, providing some amusement for the experienced settlers. Later Alf. Tracy joined the boys and farmed in Heart Valley.

Both Ed and Alf. had attended the Calgary Technical School in Calgary, and their interests led to mechanical pursuits rather than farming.

George and Sylva started a small country store, then sold out and moved to Edmonton.

Ed. and Alf. eventually moved to Woking and operated garages there. After a few years, Alf sold his garage and moved to Whonnock, B.C. where he and Norm are operating a garage. Since this writing Alf. and Norm have moved to Quesnel, B.C.

I moved to B.C. in 1957 and have been teaching in Haney ever since.

Some of my fondest memories of my teaching career were spent in the little log school in West Vale. I had been a student there when the school first opened in 1930. Mrs. Art Johnston was our first teacher. Later, I returned there as a teacher.

The school lacked modern conveniences, no electric lights, no indoor plumbing, but there was also no vandalism. The country children were wonderful. In those days children were still able to organize their own games.

Later the new school was built and the log school was closed. I remember the year the Heart Valley School was closed and the children were vanned to West Vale. In the winter time Ed. vanned the Heart Valley students in a



The three Tracy brothers, George, Ed and Alf with Mrs. Tracy Sr. and granddaughter, Loretta. Mac the dog.

covered sled with a small heater in it. It was a long trip to the end of the line as far as the Scriba's, so he would spend the night at the Scriba's or Sam Lee's and bring the students back in the morning.

My total class population for the two schools was 36. It was a tremendous experience. On Friday nights, our two children and I would accompany Ed on his last trip for the week, as we were usually invited to some of the homes in Heart Valley for supper. What wonderful hospitality! We visited the Sam Lee's, the Scriba's, Frank Mitchell's and a number of others. I also remember stopping in for tea with the Gulick family.

I often think back to the days of teaching the Heart Valley and West Vale children, and wonder where they are now and what they are doing.

THE GEORGE TRACY STORY WEST VALE

by Loretta Cleland and Ellenor Cleland

Our dad, George Sterling Tracy and his brother Edward moved to the district from Edmonton in 1929. George's homestead was the NW 17-76-3. They were joined a short time later by their younger brother Alfred, all of whom took out homesteads.

George Tracy married a schoolteacher from Edmonton, who ventured north to teach her first, or novice year, at West Vale school. Her name was Margaret Sylva Hamilton, and she boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson Sr. George and Sylva were married at Heart Valley Church on January 2nd, 1933, by the Rev. G.S. Casmore of Grande Prairie. The attendants at the wedding were Arnold and Alvina Berwick.

George and Sylva built a log house on the homestead across the road from the Beamer's. They had two daughters, Loretta and Ellenor. Ed Tracy's farm was north of there and there are memories of many neighbors coming to visit and of enjoying their company, of fellowship and community spirit, of neighbors helping with the work and providing garden produce. There are



George Tracey's log house on the homestead with Sylvia Tracy in front. Notice the method of roofing.



Loretta and Ellinor Tracy - new wagon but old dolls.

memories of the horses, cows and the barn, making ice cream, picking berries and flowers, and the happy times of childhood. One of the remembered events by Loretta, was when she sang a new song, 'When I Grow Too Old To Dream', at the school Christmas concert as a very young girl. The annual summer visits to (Grannie) Mrs. Maunsell Tracy and her daughter Ellenor, to the three Tracy families were eagerly awaited and enjoyed.

In approximately 1938, George Tracey built a large store with living quarters in the back and upstairs, located about two miles north of the homestead farm, next to the Munro's. We girls went to West Vale school for our primary education, where Mrs. Ed (Mabel) Tracy was the teacher. We went to school from the store and were often provided with rides by the Hallock family in their cutter during the winter. In the summer months we often rode to school in a child's wagon, drawn by our dog, 'Mickey'. On one occasion the dog pursued a rabbit through the bushes, damaging the wagon and harness somewhat, and so he received a scolding and licking, and never chased rabbits again while pulling the wagon.

The neighbors put on a farewell party for our family the night before our departure for Edmonton by train, in November, 1941.

Some of our neighbors and families in the district were Beamers, Gulicks, Munros, Parlees, Bohnkes, Olsons, Berwicks, Wilsons, Peebles, Sathers, Funks, Hallocks, Johnsons, Nagels, Cairns, Buchanans, and others.

Our family lived in Edmonton for many years, where our Dad worked as a carpenter and contractor until his death from a sudden heart attack in 1952, at the age of 41 years. Our mother remained a widow until her death in 1970.

We, Loretta and Ellenor, married brothers, Harold and Albert Cleland, who farm south of Vermilion, Alberta. Harold and Loretta Cleland have three children. The oldest daughter, Lesley, is married and lives in Edmonton, and their son, Hugh and youngest daughter Eileen are at home. Albert and Ellenor Cleland have three children, Rachel, Roy and Earl, all of whom are living at home.

We have travelled back to the Heart Valley District a few times during the years, to keep alive memories of our childhood in the Peace River Country.

PIONEERING IN THE GREAT PEACE RIVER COUNTRY

written by Esther Triebwasser and Bertha Olsen

Our father, William Triebwasser, moved to his homestead in the West Vale District in the fall of 1931, near where the Metheny's and Carl Ganz's lived. Dad and Emil Dick from Beiseker had loaded a freight car with some machinery, wagon, sleigh, a team of horses, a few cows and household furniture. Our mother and Aldena, our youngest sister, went at the same time. Bertha and I worked somewhat longer helping brother Albert and brother-in-law with their meagre harvest. On our way north we visited friends and relatives at Bently, Lacombe, Leduc and Millet. We arrived by train at Wanham in November, and were thrilled with all the snow and the beautiful scenery on the way to the homestead, approximately 16 miles from Wanham.

Perhaps not that first day, but many times after, we stopped at the half way mark at the Marius Olsen home to get warmed up, and enjoy a delicious lunch served by George's mother. We found the majority of the homesteaders friendly, especially when the young bachelors found out about some new girls which had come to the district. That's how we met George Olsen and Jack Redgrove; Bertha later married George and I married Jack.

We attended church at Peoria as often as possible, which was about 10 miles with horses and democrat. That was our only way of getting around, and the best way as cars those days were scarce. The horse and buggy were most suitable for the roads then.

Dad had 160 acres of fertile land, with a soft water spring on it. Most of it was heavy timber of spruce and pine trees. Dad, with the help of us girls, cleared 10 acres and had it broken, plus a 1 1/2 acre garden, where we grew lovely vegetables that tasted better than any I'd ever eaten. What with our supply of fresh milk and vegetables, with moose or deer meat in winter hanging on the north side of our little home (as good as any deep freeze), we felt we ate like royalty.

George and Jack were fencing for Dad the first summer, when Dad said, "Boys we are out of meat". So the next evening after supper they went out to where the



Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Treibwasser.

Buffalo Lakes Lumber Company had been logging, about three miles southwest of Dad's homestead. They had been hunting for about an hour when George saw a deer. He shot it and dressed it out and put it on the back of the saddle. Jack and George then started back. On the way home Jack saw and shot a second deer. They dressed this one and put it on the back of Jack's saddle and came home. Now we had plenty meat for a couple of months. They then hung the deer in a new chicken house Dad had nearly completed. The next morning Dad asked the boys if they had any luck. Jack said, "No," but he had seen a skunk in the new chicken house. So Dad went to the chicken house to investigate 'the skunk.' When he came back to the house he was all smiles. "Some skunk," he said. "Thanks boys, now we will have meat for a long time."

George and Jack finished the fence in a few days. Now there was lots of nice green pasture for the horses and cows for the rest of the summer and years to come.

In the wintertime we girls loved to stamp through the deep snow. In the summertime we picked berries along the little creek, also weeded in the garden. Then there was canning to do.

At one time a calf had gotten lost. We were searching for it along the creek, when we were sure we saw bear tracks in the mud, so I'm not too sure if we found the calf or not. Nevertheless we were always on the lookout for wild animals.

One funny incident: we girls were milking cows in our rail-built corral, with the help of Jack who had hung his sweater on a corral post. Being warm weather he didn't think of the sweater till later. We searched everywhere for that sweater - not a shred was found. We came to the conclusion that a cow had eaten it with no ill effects, such as cattle in the south suffer after eating an overdose of baler twine.

I stayed on the homestead longer than the rest of the family, moving to Peoria District in the spring of 1935.



Bertha, Aldina and Ester Triebwasser.

Dad sold the homestead to John Krenzler (much to the regret of some of the family later). We felt it should have stayed in the family. As I think back, it must have been hard on Mother, leaving a large house to live in a three room shack. However, she did not complain. At least we ate well, regardless of days of buying very few groceries - only necessities, such as flour, salt, sugar, and cereal.

We had some hard times, but mostly they were happy times.

KIWIS IN WANHAM

The Turnbells

Our natural history books tell us that the kiwi is a flightless bird, but in spite of this, two did manage to find their way to Wanham in the summer of 1972. The male of the species was to become the new principal of the school, while the female was occupied with the rearing of a newborn female chick. Thus, the Turnbells, Bill, Alice, and Amanda, arrived in Wanham.

Wanham provided us with many new experiences - the first of which was living in a trailer. To an uninitiated Kiwi, the word 'trailer' conjures up the image of a wooden or steel cart-type object, which is used to haul things from one point to another. My trailer was to be home for the next 18 months and we found it quite adequate for our needs - soon making it homey, by adding our own knick-knacks.

The only thing that had me worried was when we were told that a bear had come through the big window of 'our' trailer while it was parked in another location. Not being very clued up on the habits of bears at that stage, I found the whole idea of being invaded by a bear somewhat disturbing, to say the least!!

Bears were to figure in our life at a later date, when Bill's mother stayed with us, over the summer of '73. Bill was helping to keep watch on hives where bears had been helping themselves to a few free meals. Bill's mother decided that seeing a bear before she returned to New

Zealand would be really worthwhile. It was about the one thing she hadn't seen on her North American travels.

Little did she realize she'd see one at such close quarters. Several hours later she was virtually face to face with one, as she sat paralyzed with fear, in the front seat of our car with Bill, while the bear slowly sniffed right 'round the yellow metal intruder, which had suddenly appeared near the source of the sweet honey.



The Turnbull Children. Left to Right: Rachel - 6, Emma - 4 and Amanda - 9.

It was a highly delighted, but somewhat shaken lady who arrived back, greatly in need of a 'cuppa'. My coming down from the other end of the trailer and appearing suddenly (or so it seemed to Mrs. T., Senior) was enough to make her shriek with delayed fright. Every nerve in her body had been screaming silently within her, but instinct had told her to keep quiet and not move. Now back at home, she was unable to relax for several hours to come. This story is still related, whenever the topic of Canada and/or bears comes up, and now we can all have a good laugh in a much more relaxed atmosphere. The only bears we'd be likely to see would be in a zoo.

Now back in their native surroundings, the two kiwis have established a new nest and have added a further two female chicks to their brood - (thus ensuring the species doesn't risk extinction) Rachel - 1975 and Emma - 1977.

Our Canadian-born chick will be 7 years old in 1979, and although she was too young to remember anything of her babyhood in Canada, she delights in hearing about what life was like - especially the snow.

We hope one day, in the not too distant future, to return and show all three of our chicks the areas where we lived while in Canada, and meet up with many of the wonderful people who made our life in Canada an experience we'll never forget.

ROCKING CHAIR MEMORIES

submitted by Mrs. A.J. Fortier, Pearl

My mother, Millie Berthina Peterson was born in Easton Township, Wisconsin, U.S.A., May 25, 1888.

My father, Andrew E. Urness, was born in Godhue

County, Minnesota. They met and married in Sherbrook Steele County, North Dakota, April 5, 1905.

They started farming and having a family near Finely, North Dakota. They were blessed with nine children in the States, seven boys and two girls. Two boys died while they were in the States.

Dad Urness's health was not good, so his family doctor advised him to go to a new country and different climate.

A BIG MOVE

They sold their farm in Finely and moved by train to Canada in the year 1918, to a little place in southern Alberta, called Enchant. There my parents started farming. The country around Enchant is a dry belt, so they didn't have very good crops. But they had five more children, one girl and four boys, making fourteen children in all.

We lived in Enchant until the year 1923. It wasn't an easy life for Mother and Dad Urness. Finally Dad had to go away from home to work. He went to Vauxhall, where they had irrigated land, and crops and gardens grew well. Dad would bring home vegetables for the table, and feed for the cattle and horses as payment for his work.

We burned coal in the winter and cow chips in the summer for heat and cooking. Dad would haul coal 30 miles from Bow City coal mine to keep us warm through the long cold winter.

Good fortune did not smile on my parents, although they both worked very hard. So in the year 1923, Dad said to us, "We will move to another part of Alberta, and try our luck again."



The Urness Family - 1932. Back Row, Left to Right: Mrs. Millie Urness, Andrew Urness, Johnny, Clarence, Pearl, Sanford and Willard. Second Row: Morris Sinkwich, Alvin Urness, Melvin, Mildred and Nita. Missing: Marvin, Berlin and Alice.

WE MOVE AGAIN

They moved to a location west of Nanton in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, a beautiful country. There they settled on a farm in the Sunset School District. Dad tried mixed farming and ranching, but again bad luck followed us. Dad wasn't making enough money to



Left to Right: Alvin Urness, Bill Stephura, Clarence Urness.

keep the family and make payments on the farm, so he lost the farm.

It was about this time, in the year 1931, that Dad went to the great Peace River country and filed on a homestead about one and a half miles north of a little place called Belloy. Mother also filed on a homestead, three miles north of Belloy.

MOVE BY COVERED WAGON

So, in the year 1932, we moved again. Dad built a caravan on rubber-tired wheels that we called home for two months of travelling. We had three other wagons, and took everything with us from the farm at Nanton, including horses, cattle, chickens, goats, sheep, and our two dogs. Our oldest sister, Alice, did not come with us. She had married in the meantime, and one of my brothers had died as a baby in Nanton. So there were ten children and Mother and Dad.

Some of the family were grown up. I was 19 years old, and my brothers and I decided to help Mother and Dad move their belongings to the north. I am the second girl in the family, Pearl. There are four children older than myself. My job was to herd the cattle north to Peace River country. My brothers took turns at driving the teams on the other wagons.

Mother cooked our meals as we were travelling in the caravan. Dad had built it big enough to put the kitchen stove in, along with their bed and a cupboard or two. When we stopped, we ate on a long table on one side of the wagon. We let the table down on chains, and we all ate our meals standing at that table. When we had everything cleared off the table, Dad would hook it up along the wall of the caravan and we would move on.

Mother and Dad and our little baby brother, Melvin, slept in the covered wagon. My little sister, Mildred, and I would roll up in our blankets at night and sleep under the caravan. The rest of the family had their special blankets to sleep in. Each one of us had our jobs to do. The animals and chickens and sheep had to be cared for. Dad was the overseer of us all. He would check to make sure our jobs were done.

JOURNEY'S END

We arrived at Belloy the end of August in 1932. We

had no place to go, so a good neighbor, Alf Fortier took us in, cattle and all. The Fortiers had come to the country in the year 1919, so had fences and a house and barn built. They said we could put out cattle in their pasture. We moved our wagons into the pasture, too. We stayed there until we got our first log house built, before the cold weather came.

HOMESTEADING

Myself, I really thought we were all going to perish, our first winter on the homestead at Belloy. My mother always said that faith in God and a lot of hard work would bring us through, and so it did! There were no schools, no churches and no doctors. Our nearest doctor was in Grande Prairie, about 60 miles away. We were very fortunate that our family was healthy. We had three neighbors that homesteaded before we came. There were 2 stores, a post office, an eating house, and a little four by six station in Belloy. We had to cut trees and make roads - wagon trails they were. The train came to Belloy once a week.



Left to Right: Annie, Alvin, Willard, Melvin, Bunny Fortier, Sanford, relatives of Urness's. On Ground: Andy Urness and Nita.

OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS ON THE HOMESTEAD

Our first Christmas was a happy one in a way. I think the hard times brought our family closer together. We cut a big spruce tree and brought it into the log house and decorated it with anything we had, such as rose hips strung on a string, colored paper chains and little foil ornaments made from tobacco packages. We had a few wax candles and holders that we had brought with us.

We had a good Christmas dinner of moose roast, brown gravy, mashed potatoes, vegetables, homemade bread, roasted wheat coffee, homemade marshmallows that Mother had made, and carrot pudding that a kind neighbor had given us. We sat around after dinner talking about old times and other Christmases we'd had. I think my dad recited the old poem, ' 'Twas The Night Before Christmas.' We had an old Edison gramophone and a few cylinder records. We danced around the tree as the old tunes were played on the gramophone. We had lighted the wax candles, which looked like stars in the dark. We only had oil lamps then. One of us would stand guard over the candles so they wouldn't set our tree on fire, and also wind the gramophone. We wished each

other a merry Christmas, the same as always and hoped for a more prosperous new year. We all enjoyed a real good time.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

That first winter was cold, with four feet of snow. Our main diet was moose meat and potatoes.

We had arrived too late in the fall to clear land and plant a garden. We had a few very good neighbors who were there a few years before us. They gave us vegetables and shared anything else they had with us. I am sure we would have perished that first winter, but for their goodness.

MOOSE HOCK SHOES

The spring came, but by this time our shoes were wearing out. So my brothers made moose-hock shoes, which were warm enough worn with a pair of socks. The only trouble we had with moose-hock shoes was that after they were worn a while they took on an offensive odor. What a smell! But there was nothing else to be had for everyday wear. We saved our shoes for special occasions. We were not quite sure when we would be able to afford new ones.

The first spring of 1933, we lost most of our horses and cattle from swamp fever, so it was more hard times with the good times. We got our house built and cleared land for a garden. We knew if we could get some land cleared and planted, things would surely grow since there was lots of rain and sunshine.

Things and times got better as the years went by. We have seen a lot of changes taking place in the north. Where there was dense forest and bush, there are now



The Sanford Urness farm home.

rolling fields of grain and vast hay meadows. Anyone that has lived in the Peace River country knows the vast country that it is. In 1936, I married Alfred Fortier, son to the neighbor that had taken us in. Then in 1937, our first son was born - Arnold Norris. After I was married I was not as close to my family.

In 1938, sorrow came to our family when our dear

mother passed away. Dad carried on as best he could, looking after the rest of the family. My older sister, Alice came and took our baby brother home to live with her. My brother, Melvin, came back to his dad after he grew up.

My husband and I had our sweet little daughter in 1938. We also are blessed with a younger son, Wayne Edward.

WAR

In 1939 war broke out, and four of my brothers were called to the army and airforce. They were troubled times, but life had to go on. We were all waiting for the war to end, doing what we could - sending parcels to the boys overseas, and looking after the farm. We went through some hard times. Dad always said, "Chins up! We will live through these hard times." Dad was worried and hurt about his sons having to go to war, but he was really proud of them all. He didn't say much to the rest of us of how he felt. He carried on with the farming with my brothers who were left to work on the home front.

Then, great joy! The war ended in 1945 and all the boys came home. There was rejoicing and home-coming parties and dances. The old town of Belloy was ringing with shouts and laughter again.

We were so happy to have the family together again! Then my brothers began getting married one by one. Some moved away from Belloy, and some stayed and carried on with the farming. My younger sister moved away and also got married. The boys helped Dad with the farming. He was getting older, and finally the Urness brothers took over the farm, along with their own land.

I have four brothers still living and farming in the great Peace River country.

My husband, Alfred, and I and family moved to Edmonton and are living there. In 1970, sorrow came to the Urness family again when our dad passed away. He has really been missed by the whole family. He was always our overseer, always watching out for us one way or another, telling us when we were doing wrong, or praising us when we did right. My mother and father are buried in the Belloy Cemetery.

This was the last time our family was all together. We are hoping to get together for a family reunion.

My husband, Alfred and I go back to Belloy - 'Home', as we still call it, where he likes to hunt, and he has gotten a moose every fall that we have been back. Our own little family has grown and are married. They are busy, as we were, raising their own families. The cycle of life goes on. Time waits for no one.

THE ROBERT WADE FAMILY

written by Marion Wade

Robert Wade was born in England. When he was 6 years old his folks moved to a 1/4 section of land at Fenn, Alberta. Later they moved to another 1/4 section by Erskine. Robert joined the airforce as a mechanic and spent 4 years on the east coast of Canada.

I (Marion Legg) was born at Stettler, Alberta. I lived

on a farm at Fenn for the first 16 years; then I went to Vancouver where I finished my schooling and took my nurses training. I then came back to Stettler and worked in the hospital.

Robert and I were married in the spring of 1946. Robert was helping his dad farm, while looking for a farm of his own. Between times he bought a truck and went into the trucking business. In the spring of 1947 he rented a farm for 2 years. He still did some trucking.

WE SEAL OUR FATE

In late June of 1948, Ken McCallum came by - big deal, land for veterans in the Peace River area! The result was that Ken, Jo, Robert and I came north to look the situation over. We had dinner at Lassiter Camp (where the Lassiter school is now). What a sad looking place it was. There had been no rain yet that spring, with the result that there was 3 to 4 inches of white dust everywhere in camp. This did not discourage the men. Back we went across the Burnt River. What a road! It was straight up and down, with several kinks thrown in. I was sure we would have to camp at the river as Ken's car wouldn't stay in gear on a hard pull, but with Ken driving and Robert reefing on the gearshift we made the top. The men checked over the land while Jo and I fought hordes of the biggest mosquitoes I had ever seen. The men found land they liked, which they filed on as we went back through Edmonton.

In 1949, Robert bought a "Cat" - going to break land. Farming wasn't paying off. There was no sale for quack grass. Before he got started along comes Ken again. He said the land was ready to seed, except for a few roots to pick. Away they went again. One of the first persons they met at Wanham was Leonard Metz. He lent them a granary to set up housekeeping in. They went to seeding. Things went fairly well until the morning Robert hopped out of bed onto Ken's snore paper. It nearly dissolved the partnership.

Robert spent the summer breaking land. He had built a bunkhouse, so Gordon (2 years old then) and I went with him. In August Roy was born. Robert settled the 2 boys and myself in my folks yard, and took off with Ken to Wanham to harvest. The weather wasn't very cooperative. He didn't finish harvesting until Nov. 7th. Between times he picked roots and built a granary and shanty-roofed shack to live in.

WE MOVE NORTH

In the spring of 1950 we moved up here. We went together with the Farrel brothers, Norman and Bert, and families, on a boxcar, into which went most all our worldly possessions. It was the last of April when we left Erskine. We travelled in style, a Model-A car. The Farrels each had a truck and pulled a small house trailer. The trucks were loaded with our livestock (2 cows, 1 calf and 2 pigs) and everything else we couldn't put in the box car. We made Clyde corner the first night, Enilda the second, just east of Rycroft the third. We had to go by Valleyview and Grande Prairie since the ferry was out at Watino. We made it to Codesa the next day, but had

quite a time as there were five big mud holes between Rycroft and the Burnt River. On Sunday morning the men climbed in the truck to milk the cows. A couple of families who went by on their way to church thought it was ideal having our milk supply so handy! The three men took off in the Model-A for our place and made it through the holes. They brought back a tractor and pulled the trucks through. They used it again on the Codesa road. We camped for a week in the church yard waiting for our box car to arrive. When we stopped at Rycroft our water supply was low. Mavis wanted to use some water out of the ditch for dishes. I wouldn't - too dirty. While at Codesa we used the water from the *barnyard* dugout and didn't know it! We are still living. Soon as the box car came we moved to our own place northeast of Wanham.

HOME SWEET HOME

The fall before we arrived Robert had removed a wall of our shack and put 2 tractors in it for the winter. In removing and replacing this wall the end of the bottom board next to the door had been broken off. Our cat used this as her private doorway. I didn't mind that, except the nights when she came in with a live mouse and proceeded to play with it on our bed. Our shack wasn't very good. The boards had dried up a lot since it was built. In fact, at night from outside it looked as if it were made of venetian blinds. All summer I asked for my groceries to be put in boxes, which I used to paper the walls.

NEIGHBOURS

Robert got some roots picked and the crop seeded. By August things were looking good. Then along came a hail storm and took it all. That is the only hail storm we have had.

It was a busy summer but a bit lonely for me. There were lots of close neighbours but mostly men. Pete Bury just east of us, I didn't see until he was on his way home in the fall. He never came back. There was Bill Feniak, and further on Tim Lanes. To the west was "bachelor corner", Bill Evans, Bill Bennett and Ronny Jeffs on the south side, and Barney Archer on the north. Pete and Nellie Franchuck lived with Barney until they got a house moved. Nellie was so quiet and shy she was very hard to visit with. She changed before long. We had a good laugh at our neighbours. The ones to the east had no water so they hauled it from the dugout on the hill across from us; the ones to the west used this dugout as their swimming hole.

OUR TRUCK DELUXE

Robert needed a truck so he cut the back off our car and built a flat deck. For awhile we had no top over the front seat. This was a deluxe model - it had a heater - a pipe from the manifold to direct the heat back into the car. One Sunday we were taking a drive over the Burnt River. There was no bridge then, you had to ford the river. Everything went fine until the water came shooting in our heater pipes. Did it feel hot! Just then the back

wheel was having trouble getting over a rock and started to spin, shooting water into the air. I haven't had a hot bath and a cold shower in such quick order before - nor since.

Robert bought a log house and barn southeast of Codesa. At the end of September he proceeded to move them. He got the barn moved right away, but it took six weeks to move the house. It was Nov. 8th when they finally set it down on the frozen ground. Next day it started to snow. We moved in anyway. It was warmer than our shack, even though a quarter of the living room floor was missing.

All the close neighbours moved out for the winter. Norman Farrels moved their trailer to our yard, where they stayed most of the winter.

We didn't have much cash but we lived well enough. We butchered the pigs, got in a supply of groceries and the cows were milking. We made ice cream to celebrate all birthdays, holidays and anything else we could think of. For a change of meat, one of the men would shoot a prairie chicken (feeding on what the hail missed) and the other would run to pick it up before an owl carried it off.

We had a lot of snow that winter. It was over the fence posts. When spring came it came with a bang. We had a river between our house and the barn.

NEW NEIGHBOURS

That spring several new neighbors moved in. Florian Baranec, Bob Blacklock and Melvin Skage. Both Blacklocks and Skages had their houses on the corner of our place until they were able to move them to their own land. In the following years L. Irlands and A. Redlons moved in. They both moved out, although Irlands still own their land.

SCHOOL

In 1953 there were several children here of school age, but no school district. The Forecast School District was formed. The school board would do nothing about getting the kids to school until after their next meeting, which was two weeks after school started.

Robert volunteered to take the kids to town, until some arrangements were made. The board hired him to drive them in for that year. Once the kids started school we were kept busy taking them to various sports. The sports weren't as organized then as they are now. Roy was in Forest Wardens, 4H grain club, and Air Cadets. Both Doris and Joan were in all school sports. Dale's interests were baseball and horses. George was in some baseball.

All the kids are out on their own now. We have seen a lot of changes. There are now bridges built at the Burnt River, Watino, and Dunvegan. There's a paved highway where all the mud holes were. The two towns of Belloy and Prestville have disappeared. Much more land is opened up. Robert's hobby of flying helps us keep up with the changes. I'm still working with the 4H club. It keeps you up to date with the younger generation. All in all, it is a good life.

KEN WATERS AND FAMILY

by Elsie Waters

Ken, Elsie and Bill, 3 1/2 years at the time, arrived in Wanham area in March, 1948. Ken had acquired a clearing contract through the Alberta Government for Veterans of World War II.

Our first camp was an old school house near Belloy and as the spring thaw came with a gush, it seemed impossible to think of clearing land with the floods tearing out bridges and breaking up roads. This was no time to admit defeat - for one reason, there was no way out. However, eventually the water subsided and the mosquitoes took over, which gave us something different to fight till the burning could commence.

Ken and his men cleared thousands of acres, while Elsie cooked and kept the records of the activities. Bill (Billy) was a little boy busy encountering a child's events. Because he had to play alone, his participation in the clearing project included pretending he was a welder and a famous tractor operator. His experience of camp life was more enjoyable than the concern and regard shared by his parents.

When it became feasible that this land would become cultivated and cropped, Ken entered the machinery business in Wanham.

Our second son Ray was born February 2, 1950. This was another year of huge snow drifts, but not so much spring flooding.

GOOD AND BAD A PART OF LIFE

Our machinery and truck business was one of unpredictable events. It grew and prospered with the times, but good and bad fortune is part of a lifetime it seems. In 1953 fire destroyed our business and living quarters.

It's an occurrence such as this that brings out the best in everyone, and the Wanhamites certainly proved they are the best ever. We commend the people of Wanham for



The Waters family. Left to Right: Grandpa Waters, Bill, Elsie, Ray and Ken.

their concern and help in this time of need.

There seemed to be no possibility of reconstructing and picking up all the pieces, so Ken went to work in Grande Prairie and eventually had an opportunity to enter



Ray Waters, 2 years old - making the wheels go round.



Ken and Elsie Waters.

partnership in an automotive dealership in Dawson Creek.

Leaving Wanham was another sad event of our lifetime. Grandpa Waters (who had come up from Kalispell, Montana, to make his home with us) was also reluctant to leave and was offered a chance to remain with Albert Leriger till we established a home in Dawson Creek, B.C.

Our life has been made up of many moves since leaving Wanham - to Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, California and back to Chetwynd. Ray, however, remained true to his place of birth and returned to Wanham when he was still in his teens. Albert and Terry Leriger welcomed him, and their home became his home till he completed his education in Edmonton. Ray married a Wanham girl, Dorothy Albert, and lives in Wanham. He has four darling children, Tracy, Tina, Willy and Angie.

Bill experienced four years in the U.S. Navy, Submarine Service and served mostly in the West Pacific region. When he completed his duties with the Navy he entered the University of Davis, California, where he spent four years. Bill married a Woodland, California

girl, Judy Walton, and they now live in Chetwynd, B.C., with their lovely little girls, Kimberly, Stacey and Sandy.

To all of us, Wanham has remained the home of glowing memories. The friends we acquired there will remain through a lifetime. The years we spent in Wanham were active ones. Ken was interested in community affairs and eagerly performed a part in the progress of Wanham.

The whole community seemed to seek harmony in all activities. It was an active community for sports, clubs and village affairs. Everyone worked together for one big aim - to make Wanham a good place to live.

HEART VALLEY DISTRICT

Clarence Webber

Clarence Webber came to Heart Valley in 1936 from Yellow Grass, Saskatchewan. He purchased the E. 1/2 14-76-3-6 which had been homesteaded by Percy Close. He lived on the farm until 1944, when he was married to Olive McLean who had come to the district in 1926 with her parents, John and Marie McLean. They lived in a house across the road from the Heart Valley store and post office, which they bought from Octave Prevost. In 1948 they built a home in the village of Wanham and moved with daughter Marilyn and son Garnet. Their children Allen, Lorraine, Ronald and Catherine were added to the family. In 1964 they sold their home in Wanham to Bill Lewis and built a home on the farm. The children attended Wanham school. Roads were much improved, and power was in, throughout the area.

Marilyn is married to Leslie Peebles and resides in Heart Valley. Garnet is married to Darlene Skirzyk and they live in Grande Prairie. Allen is married to Beverly Ferrey and they also live in Grande Prairie. Lorraine is married to Ted Langlois and they are farming in the Tangent area.

THE STORY OF JOHN AND MARY WEBSTER

John and I were married in Germany on March 30, 1949. I had been married before and had one daughter, Laura.

In September, 1949, we packed up and left for Scotland, where we stayed six months with John's mother and sister.

On February 21, 1950 we made the boat journey to Canada, where John had a homestead, since 1930. He had farmed and worked for his brother-in-law Frank Mitchell and other neighbours. Then in 1940, John had joined the army and soon went overseas where he was in active service in France, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

We landed in St. John on March 15, 1950; from there we took the train to Wanham. It seemed to take forever to get there. When we got to Wanham there was nobody there to meet us, so we went to the Wanham Cafe. After staying there for a while, Clarence Webber came in, he took us to his place where we enjoyed a nice meal.

Later on Frank Mitchell, our brother-in-law, came



John Webster with his sons, Johnnie and Dale.

with his team and wagon to take us to Heart Valley. Frank and Tina, his wife, gave us a little shack to live in until we built a house. In November, 1950, our first son John William was born, and in 1955 our second son, Dale, arrived.

On March 1, 1958 our daughter Laura married Larry Berg, they have two sons and one daughter now. Right after their wedding we took over the Heart Valley Post Office and Store. I took care of the store and post office while John did the farming.

The government closed all the small post offices in 1968, so after operating both the store and the post office for ten years, we closed and moved once more.

This time we didn't go very far, we settled in Grande Prairie. John got a job with the Grande Prairie College. Son John William got married in 1970 to Carla Stanvick; they have two girls now.

1972 was a sad year for us. John passed away after a severe illness. Dale had a fatal accident in May 1975. I still live in Grande Prairie.

WEGH, RAYMOND

With my two sisters and our parents, we moved from the dust bowl of southern Saskatchewan in the fall of 1937. From Wanham we rode in Kandt's wagon to our destination, at the intersection seven miles south. Squirrels chattered from the spruce trees, which rose like a wall on either side of the road. When I sighted our residence, I rejoiced, for it was a log cabin.

My father, Richard Wegg, set up his blacksmith shop. The location was ideal, for farmers from Peoria, Heart Valley and West Vale could drop off their ironware on the way to town, and pick it up on the way back. Plow shares, breaking colters, setting wagon tires, and welding with borax and hammering, were the main order of the day. Father could put more dent in the red-hot metal swinging the hammer with his left arm than I could with two. He made some of his own tongs and other tools, which would be antique now. Ralph Pickard ran a blacksmith shop in town.

Pete Myrlands, a quarter of a mile south, were our closest neighbors. From here I got our daily supply of Jersey milk, and carried water with two buckets suspended from a shoulder yoke. Olsons lived across the road from them.

My sister, Claudia and I attended Peace River Junior Academy in Peoria, the closest school. Miss Wetstein was our teacher.

In the spring of 1938, a devastating forest fire began which burned the timber for many miles around. Top soil was still smouldering on into the fall, leaving a red ash nearly a foot deep in places.

BINDER-TWINE SHOE LACES

The following fall, Sathers took me on their threshing crew. I was fifteen then. Erling Borseth took pity on a green horn and showed me how to harness my horses and gave me helpful cues. I thought those first few days would kill me, but then I learned, and enjoyed the rest of the season. Those were hard times. Some of us in the crew wore binder twine for shoe laces. Two dollars a day was a boon.



The Richard Wegg family - 1938. Left to Right: Richard, Raymond and Rover, Freda, Claudia and Nellie.

In 1940, my father bought a quarter section at the next intersection, one mile further south, and set up his shop there. We also started farming. There were 35 acres cleared, and we 'set to' with an axe and a grub hoe to clear the rest. Mother did seamstress jobs. Her hands are still busy, making quilts and doing needlework.

Wellmans lived across the road and Andrew Hrychuk lived on the edge of Kadot Creek. Mr. Hrychuk, I was told, carried the logs for their log cabin one at a time on his shoulder from the opposite side of the creek. He rested one end on the ground and one part on a staff when he got tired. I believe his log buildings were some of the most precision built in the country.

In the fall some years, the banks of the creek would abound with luscious saskatoons and raspberries and shiny chokecherries. Black and red currants could also be found near the water, also gooseberries. One could find skulls of the wood buffalo at that time. Stanley Sather, Edward Wellman and I found three one day. Once we



Richard Wegh in front of his blacksmith shop.

walked to Kadot Lake to hunt ducks. Mrs. Dan Gulick came riding on the gallop from the other side of the lake. When she saw we were not after muskrats, she returned on the gallop. We found a buffalo skeleton near the shore. I said, "I wonder if there is an Indian arrowhead here?" Sure enough, there was.

At this time I attended West Vale School - a log building. This was the first school my sister Frieda attended. Mr. Tomasky was our first teacher there. The following year, Mrs. Ed Tracy was teaching. Rafting in the creek nearby in the spring, and skiing in the winter on home-made skis were memorable recesses. The school grounds at West Vale and Peoria also saw some good old community softball games once a week, in the evenings when the chores were done.

FISHING

One of my friends from Saskatchewan came up to visit by bumming the freight trains. He said life in the home town was boring. He had no money, so he had lived off the land enroute - milking a cow in a pasture, here, boiling eggs taken from a hen house there. At night he covered up with paper in the box cars.

He expressed his desire to fish, for he had never fished in his life. Mother packed him a lunch one morning, and he walked seventeen miles to the Smoky River, and seventeen back, getting in at two o'clock in the morning. He had fish in the lunch bucket.

I took my tenth grade at South Slope School. Dave Kandt and I stayed at his brother Leo's place on the old Munroe farm. Mr. Jones was our teacher. We had our own school paper.

The ball field was a limited area. It was nestled between Sawyer's house and the two school buildings. A good hit down centre field would send the ball rolling on the road to Belloy. A diversion was the game, 'Kick the can!' We played in the poplars across the fence. The person who

was 'It' had to stand by the can and count to fifty while the rest of us hid. One time Wally Tansem cleverly climbed a poplar tree which bent down right over 'It'.

Once, Mrs. Ed Harrington got a group of us boys to help fight a fire. There were boys in the car, and boys standing on the running boards. The smoke became so dense, you couldn't see the road on the way between the school and town. I don't know how she stayed on the road, but she did!

FLYING CHICKEN

submitted by Nellie Wegh

You will remember there used to be a dam in the yard. One day, one of our chickens tried to take a short cut, lifted herself to a certain height and tried to fly over the dam, but plunged in, right in the middle of it! There I stood, and wondered what would happen, but that chicken made her mind up fast, and swam the rest of the way to the shore.

I'm still wondering today, how many swimming lessons it would take me to accomplish that!

(I never could swim, and never knew chickens could!)

RICHARD WEGH

Neither Richard's parents, or Nellie's were farmers, but Richard had the opportunity of spending time on his grandparent's farm. This developed his taste for farming and the desire to own land. His ambition was realized here. In addition to farming, Richard was a blacksmith, and a good one!

He had a shop on the Stone quarter where they first lived after arriving, and later another shop on the land he purchased one mile further south. His blacksmithing was a real service to area farmers, and his shop was always a great meeting place for the men.

Mrs. Wegh was a very fine seamstress and a good neighbor. Recently she made this comment:

"I will never regret that I landed on a farm. It was my biggest school in life. I am glad to have shared the joys and sorrows of a farmer."

CHRIS AND ELSIE WEIS AND FAMILY

I, Chris Weis, was born and brought up at Leader, Saskatchewan, and my wife, Elsie E. (Rambo) Weis, was born and grew up at Consort, Alberta. In the fall of 1947, we were married.

My brother and I farmed 1440 acres at Leader, and this is where Elsie and I lived for three years after we were married. In September, 1950, we bought Fred Reiswig's farm in Peoria. My brother, Ben and I drove to Peoria to make the deal.

PEACE RIVER MUD

We crossed the Smoky River on the Watino Ferry. When we got close to Wanham, we experienced mud such as we had never seen before. It took us six hours to go

from the Watino Ferry to Belloy. When we got to Belloy, we stopped to buy gas so we would make it to Wanham. We got stuck in the mud and I had to get out of the car to try to push the 'Big Desota' out. I slipped and fell into mud and water, and was mud from head to toe. I had dressed up so that I would appear business-like when looking for land to buy, but what a sight I was with this Peace River mud all over me! We finally reached Wanham and stayed there for the night. It took the rest of the night to clean my clothes so we could proceed to Peoria the next morning. We purchased four quarters of land and then went back to Saskatchewan to get ready to ship our belongings.

In October of 1950, we loaded a flat car and set off for Wanham. This was a muddy trip also, as we drove by car. The ruts were a foot deep which did not make it easy to travel. We saw a wedding party coming and I felt we should give them half of the road, but there was no way to do so. Very shortly we were out of the rut with the help of the wedding party. Instead of lending a hand to push me out, they hit my car and it flew out of the rut! There was a big dent in one of the fenders.

In a few days the machinery arrived at Wanham. It had to be moved to Peoria and this would not be easy. We found that the bridges were not wide enough for us to move the machinery over. As I was driving down the road with my fourteen foot seeder, a truck came along. The driver was shouting and cussing, and demanded that I go completely down into the ditch with the seeder. This was also a great welcome to the district.

Our son, Dallas, was born in 1951 at Sexsmith, Alberta. He is currently teaching at College Heights, Alberta. We moved to British Columbia, and here our daughter, Charlene was born in 1956. Charlene is now a secretary in Walla Walla, Washington, and we are presently living in College Place, Washington.

In 1952, I went to work for W.J. Rottacker as his book-keeper in the winter, and farmed in the summer. We worked for Mr. Rottacker for a number of years. Eventually we sold our land to Earl Lang, and moved to British Columbia.

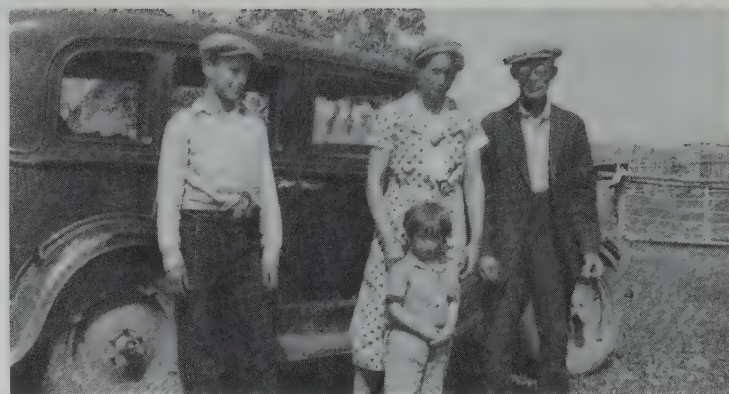
In 1954, through combined efforts of Mr. Rottacker and myself, the power was brought to the Peoria-Smoky area. It was hard to persuade some to sign up for the power.

We enjoyed our stay in the Peoria District for the years we lived there.

WELLMAN HISTORY

Frederick Wellman came to Canada from England, working his way over on a ship at the age of 16. He took up ranching in the Parkbeg, Saskatchewan District.

Mabel Wellman (Hales) came from Ontario to Saskatchewan with her family in 1903, before Saskatchewan was a province. She received her education in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and attended Normal College in Regina. She taught school in small centres near Moose Jaw, until they were married at Dunkirk, Saskatchewan, in 1922. They moved directly to Grande Prairie, living in the village and farming east of the



Back Row: Edwin, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wellman. Front: Mavis. Taken in 1937 with 1928 Chev in background.

village. Frederick was born in 1923 and Edwin in 1924 in Grande Prairie.

The family of four moved to the homestead south of Wanham in May, 1928. Fred had been on the homestead (N.W. 1/4 27-76-W6) the previous winter. He lived in a sleigh box turned upside down with a small stove in one end and a crawl space for sleeping. He had a team of horses which he kept in Andrew Stone's barn. He hauled logs and built a one room house. When the family arrived by train from Grande Prairie the house had four walls, one layer of floor boards with a wind space under the house, a pile of grain in the corner of the house and little else. Furniture was shipped to Wanham from their home in Grande Prairie. The house was completed with a partition across one end to make two bedrooms and the living room - kitchen. Many years later a frame kitchen was added to the west end of the house. This was home for many years.

In May, 1929, a call to assist with a birth was received at our home. When Mom arrived at the Funk home, Mrs. Marius Olson was also there to assist. The three ladies were all strangers to one another. While waiting for the arrival of the new baby, it was mentioned that it was my mom's birthday. Mrs. Funk said if the baby was a girl she would be named after Mom. This was impossible because they already had a 'Mabel'. However, when the baby arrived it was a boy and he was named Fred, after my dad.

In the fall of 1928, Dad got blood poison in his heel. Mom and Dad made a pair of crutches and managed to get Dad into Wanham to catch the train for Grande Prairie, to get medical attention. While waiting for the train in Wanham, a gentleman asked if he could do anything at our place to get ready for winter. Dad asked him if he would plaster the house, both inside and out. This man was Hughie Fraser. Mom peeled the logs and Mr. Fraser did the plastering. The same plaster was on the house when we left the farm in 1947.

ONE BOOT MAVIS

1934 was the big event of the Wellman family'; I, Mavis, was born in March. My memories are only of school days. During the war, probably 1941, all the kids from our neighborhood were going to West Vale school. One spring we spotted a rabbit running through stooks

LIVED IN PEACE RIVER COUNTRY

Former teacher recalls early days

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the 16th in a series of stories concerning senior citizens and pioneers of the city and their memories of years past.

"These are the gardens of the desert, these
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name;
The prairies . . ."

(William Cullen Bryant)

The soft and dimming eyes of Mabel Wellman gazed into the past as she recited from memory the lines of a long-remembered and cherished poem. She said it was her favorite piece of writing from her old Victoria Reader for Grade VIII, when she was a young girl. She still has the reader among other treasured memorabilia.

Mrs. Wellman, who lives in Temple Towers in the city, is now 84 years old. She is a former school teacher who spent many years of her life in the Peace River Country during her marriage.

Born in May of 1893 near Peterborough, Ont., she came west in August of 1903 with her family. The family settled at the town of Antler, a mile from the Manitoba border, she said.

Her father was a blacksmith who opened his own blacksmithing shop, and the family settled there. Mrs. Wellman said there were five girls and three boys in the family.

NORMAL SCHOOL

She was educated in Ontario, at Antler, and in Reston, Man. just across the border from her home. She attended Normal School in Regina after graduation from high school and took her teacher's training.

Her first school was Red Lake, then situated south of Moose Jaw "I stayed there a year, then went on to Bevitt School located near Crestwynd," she said. There were 52 pupils from grades one to eight for the young teacher to handle herself.

From Bevitt School, she decided to try the Mortlach School and stayed there for three years. While in Mortlach, Mrs. Wellman said she boarded at the home of Mrs. Wm. Hunter. She returned to Bevitt School and also did a teaching stint at Assiniboia, but having met her future husband, Frederick Wellman, at Mortlach, she married in 1922 and gave up teaching for some time when they moved to Peace River country near Grande Prairie, Alta. She later taught for two years in the north.

The Wellmans homesteaded there and had a



MRS. MABEL WELLMAN
... thumbs through album
—Times-Herald Photo

family of three children, two sons and a daughter, Mrs. Wellman said they lost one of their sons, Frederick Jr., in 1931 from meningitis. Her husband died in 1945. Today, she has three grandchildren.

"I loved the Peace River country, it was beautiful and if my husband hadn't died, I would have remained there," she said. There were many happy times for the family, and the depression years didn't affect them the same way prairie-dwellers to the south suffered. "We always had more than enough to eat, and we never went without anything," said Mrs. Wellman.

LUSH CROPS

She recalled the lush crops of vegetables including

potatoes, turnips, carrots, cabbages and beets, which were packed into big wagons and sent to southern Alberta where they were given to needy families. "We did mixed farming, with some livestock, grain-growing and such," she recalled. "But it was always the livestock that kept us supplied with most food needs," she said. Mrs. Wellman baked her own bread and made her butter and lard.

MUD HOLE INCIDENT

She smiled as she recalled an incident when the children were small. "We were on our way to a picnic in an old democrat buggy, and on the way there, we hit one of the awful mudholes filled with muck," she said. "Those

holes were everywhere, and they always seemed to be on the trails, making it difficult to miss them.

"Well, on the way to the picnic, our wagon hit this mudhole and it tipped the buggy. My husband, all dressed up in his best Sunday suit, had to get out and right it. There he was, up to his knees in mud. I asked him what he thought he was doing standing there in his best suit!"

"When we got going again, we stopped near some trees, and we cleaned up his trousers. Eventually they dried, and I brushed them as best I could, and we continued on to the picnic."

Now, up in the Peace River country, even in the summer,

you don't travel in the evening without a coat because it gets too chilly. So, on our way home from the picnic, we were wearing our coats, and had an old Indian blanket across our knees, and as I held our youngest in my arms," she said. "Would you believe it? We came to that same mud hole and we hit it again. When the buggy tipped, I couldn't hang on. Suddenly the blanket fell off and spread over the mud hole like Sir Galahad's cape. I went flying and the child and I landed head first in the mud hole, but the blanket saved us from getting a drop on us," she said.

"It was the strangest thing! Then it was my husband's turn to ask what I thought I was doing standing on my head in a mud hole!" she laughed. "It didn't seem too funny then, but looking back, it was really humorous."

SOLD THE FARM

When her husband died, Mrs. Wellman said her son was still in the army, and her daughter was still very young, so she sold the farm and came to Moose Jaw in 1947 to stay with her parents who were living here at the time.

She said she bought a home here and took in roomers, and she also worked at the Union Hospital in the dietary department for about 12 years. She also worked at Ina Grafton Gage Home for a few years.

As the years passed, Mrs. Wellman said the house became too much for her to look after, so she sold it and was fortunate enough to be one of the first tenants in Temple Towers when it was completed and opened four years ago.

"I like it here," she said. "My daughter does my shopping for me and I have a cleaning woman come in about once a month."

Mrs. Wellman has been a member of the Orange Lodge since 1948, is a member of the Salvation Army, and a former Rebekah. She used to do a lot of crocheting, but since her eyesight began to dim, she is unable to do it anymore.

"I love antiques," she said, and displayed a few of the cherished antique items she has. In addition, she is proud of her large collection of miniature china, pottery and glass figurines, mostly gifts from friends and family over the years.

"It's been a good life but I'm comfortable here at Temple Towers," she said. "I guess the memories are all that is left."

Mrs. Mabel Wellman, former teacher recalls early days.

from the previous fall. We all had to chase the rabbit through the stooks and across Wegh's new breaking. When I got home I was wet and muddy and minus one new high rubber boot. Edwin was sent to look for it but never did find it. I had to wear those terrible felt boots and buckle overshoes until summer came that year. I couldn't get new boots from Eaton's in Winnipeg soon enough to finish out the spring weather.

A travelling clinic came to Saddle Mountain School for school age children the summer of 1941, with examinations one day and surgery the next. Every willing parent had to assist in carrying the children out of the operating area, and in any other way possible. I had my tonsils and adenoids removed and also a number of teeth pulled at that time. About three hours after surgery you went home and the clinic moved to a new location.

During war years, before Edwin joined up, he acquired a motorcycle with a side car. This bike gave everyone a ride, even Funk's nanny goat. That goat loved to ride laying down in the side car. In September 1945 Dad died. Edwin was stationed at Vernon, B.C. at this time.

Christmas 1946, Mom was in the hospital in Grande Prairie having had surgery. We received a message over CFGP (Grande Prairie) that Mom was coming home by train to Wanham and then would try to get a ride by car to Myrland's corner. We were to meet her there with the team and bring her home. She couldn't get a car ride, so came home in Sam Lee's covered sleigh. The Morrison boys from Heart Valley had taken a calf to Wanham that day for Sam Lee, in this covered sleigh. The calf had broken the back seat of the sleigh where Mom was sitting on the return trip, and goodness knows what else the calf had done.



Mrs. Wellman with son, Edwin, and baby, Mavis. 1935 winter means of transportation.

WHY ARE YOU STANDING IN THE MUD, FRED

There were many humorous events and I imagine as many sad incidents. The road to Wanham in those early days was mainly 'liquid mud'. A church service and picnic in Wanham called all families from all directions. The Wellman four dressed in Sunday best and started for town with a team and democrat. When the family reached the area of the road so fondly called 'the mud hole', the democrat hit a hole with one wheel and a

'mountain' with a wheel on the opposite side. Fred was on the low side so had no choice but to leap out into the liquid mud, knee deep. Mother said, "Fred, what are you doing standing there in the mud?" Getting back into the rig and allowing the mud to dry, brushing the Sunday best off, on they went into town for the big events of the day. On the return trip Mabel had Edwin asleep in her arms and Freddy was sitting in the middle of the seat, when they hit the same spot in the road. Mabel was on the low side this time, however. The robe they had over their knees went out first, spread out nice and square, out Mabel went and stood on her head in the center of the robe with Edwin still asleep in her arms. It was Fred's turn to ask, "Mabel, what are you doing sitting in the mud?"

Freddie and Edwin were some of the first pupils at West Vale school, having Alice Hawkinson (Johnston) as their first teacher. During the war years (1940's), teachers were very hard to find. School was a real privilege. We would start school late in the term at West Vale, and maybe before Christmas we would be transferred to Mersey, and then maybe before Easter time we would be back at West Vale again! Mabel taught at Mersey school two or three times when a teacher was unavailable, and also taught one year at Heart Valley, 1943-44. During her year at Heart Valley, Mabel and Mavis lived in a one room cabin in Frank Mitchell's yard on week days and returned home on weekends. The following year we took correspondence for the full year. We had taken correspondence for part of the school year in the past, and many times in the future.

COFFIN FOR FREDDIE

Freddie became ill in January, 1931. Mr. William McLean heard of his illness and came to our home to see if the family would like him to make a coffin, which he did. Freddie died at home January 13th, 1931. Fred had to lay the body in the coffin and nail it shut. Mrs. William McLean and her sister, Mrs. MacDonald, made the only flower arrangement for the funeral. This was made of pine branches and flowers from their summer hats. After the death of Freddie, the only partition in the house plus all his clothing, bedding and anything he might have handled had to be burnt. The new partition was built later.

Mavis (now Graham) was born in Grande Prairie in 1934. In 1937 we bought our first car (1928 Chev) and drove to Moose Jaw for a holiday. This trip took up to two weeks to drive one way. We drove this same car for many years, even though more times than not it would have a 'heart attack' and refuse to start. When these attacks occurred the team would be hooked on the front with Mabel in charge of the horses and Fred in the car. She would run along side the team, keeping one eye on the car and the other on the team, going round and round the house until the car started. It often took a number of trips around the house. On one occasion she wasn't running close enough to the vehicles and ran full belt into the little out-house. Needless to say, the little house was relocated before she demolished it.

One year we had a big crop and not enough granaries to thresh into. When Bill Davis and his threshing crew arrived it was decided to have someone inside the granary to haul the grain back so the granary could be filled to the brim. Mavis, age 5 or 6, was elected for the job. Boards were added to the door until the door was covered. The only way to exit from the granary was through the grain shoot opening, in the peak. The field was bare and it was dinner time, so all the men went in for dinner while Bill prepared to move the thresher to a new location. Then someone realized Mavis was still in the granary. They tried to rescue her by placing a ladder up the outer wall of the granary, first from the ground and then from the top of the thresher, but were unsuccessful. Eric Severe was one of the men on the threshing crew. To Mavis, Eric was eight feet tall when he called from the ground in his Norwegian English, "Yump, I catch you". 'Yump' she did, and he did catch her, without any injury to man or child.

Edwin joined the army during the second world war and in September, 1945, Fred died at home. Fred and Freddie are both buried in the Heart Valley Cemetery. Edwin returned from the army the end of 1945, and in the spring of 1947 we sold out. Mabel and Mavis moved to Moose Jaw and Edwin remained in the Wanham area.

Edwin married Gladys Cranston of Woking, in 1949, and lived in Woking. They had a daughter, Carla, born in 1954, and in 1955 moved to Whonnock, B.C., where they still reside.

Mavis was married to Jim Graham in 1956 in Moose Jaw. They have two children, Larry born 1959 and Karen in 1962. The Grahams and Mabel are all residing in Moose Jaw.

Fred had acted as weed inspector for a number of years, and had always had a very keen medical interest in animals, caring for his own and neighbors animals in time of need.

THE DELBERT V. WELLS FAMILY More commonly known as 'Sonny'

by Fran Wells

I first met Del in Edmonton in 1944, where he was employed by the U.S. Army as a heavy duty mechanic. He was quite 'the wolf' in those days - complete with sheep's clothing. I was young and gullible but loved being wooed, presented with chocolates and gifts, along with his long line of ...!

In 1945 we were married in the Grace Lutheran Church in Edmonton. We lived for a short time in a suite on Jasper Avenue, next to the Corona Hotel. I can still remember how nice Del had fixed up the suite for me. He even purchased new doilies for the few pieces of furniture that he had bought from the previous renter.

That summer we rented a little house on 3 acres of land on 147th Street - 90th Avenue (for \$15.00 per month), in west Edmonton. This was much better for Albert, as he could play outside the yard. We could have purchased the house and the 3 acres for \$1500.00, but that was *SO*



Left to Right: Joe Myers, Delbert Wells, Sr., Maude Wells, Dick, Ralph, Del (Sonny) and Hazel.

MUCH money in those days that we just couldn't afford it. We enjoyed living in that little two room house. The water man came every week and filled our barrels. It wasn't as convenient as the suite, as we had to use the 'outhouse', but having a yard and being away from the traffic on Jasper Avenue more than compensated for the inconvenience. Our only girl, Betty, arrived while we lived in that little house in west Edmonton.

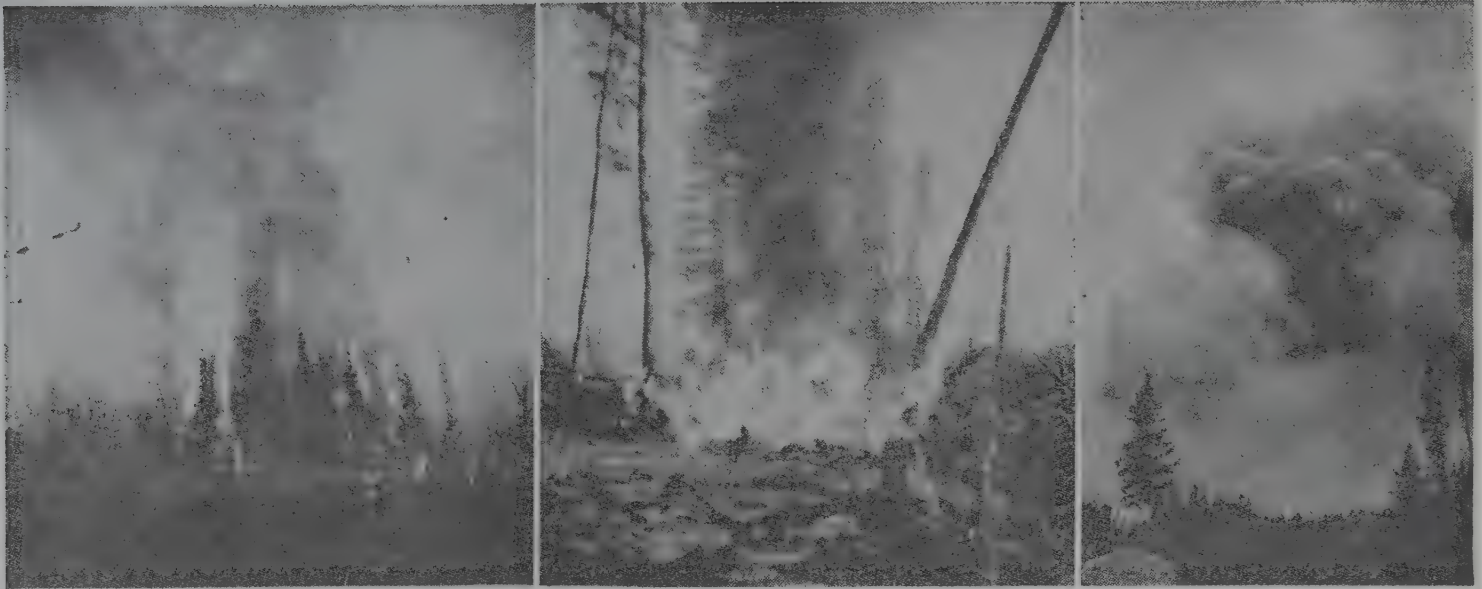
The U.S. Army closed it's big overhaul shop at the Railhead, in March of 1946. However, Del was offered a job as a heavy duty maintenance engineer for Northwest Highway System at Destruction Bay at Mile 1083 on the Alaska Highway, on the shore of Kluane Lake in the Yukon. Destruction Bay was 170 road miles northwest of Whitehorse. So Del and one of his fellow workers, Nick, left with our 1941 Ford Coupe for Dawson Creek and then up the Alaska Highway, to see what accommodation he could find for the four of us at Kluane Lake, Yukon.

I remember how I hated to sell the set of dishes we had received as a wedding present from the boys where Del worked. But it was a must, as Del could only take so much in the car and Albert, Betty and I were to fly to Whitehorse carrying a minimum of baggage. Thus we had to dispose of all our furniture and also my new cook stove that Del had bought me just a few months previous.

Albert, Betty and I stayed at my mother's place in Edmonton. Del would write every night to keep me posted as to their progress on the 1600 mile route.

The Smoky River crossing had almost two feet of water on the ice and the ferryman tried to discourage Del and his partner, Nick, from crossing on the ice for fear the car would go through the ice. However, they proceeded with both doors open wide so they could jump free from the car in case it broke through. The water was up to the floor of the vehicle but, as luck would have it, they made it safely to the other side.

I still remember how happy we were when Del called us that evening to say they had made it to Dawson Creek after being on the road for 18 hours. The road around Slave Lake was very winding, soft, no pavement in those days, and the ruts were deep. This was the worst part of the trip roadwise. From Dawson Creek - Mile 0 - Alaska Highway, the road was gravel and well maintained but still very tiring and extremely dusty. No coffee shops, motels or hotels, just emergency shelters every 50 miles along the way.



Homes Razed and Wildlife Destroyed When Forest Fire Strikes

RAGING FIRE in Birch Hills burned out of control in rich timber stands four miles south of Wanham. Flames rose high in air and wind-carried sparks across roads and streams. Scenes such as this were common to smoke-sore eyes of weary firefighters.

AS FLAMES passed, charred skeletons of once-proud spruces pointed to the sky as silent witnesses to wave of destruction. Wild life lost heavily in Birch Hills of Peace River Country and many deer were trapped when fire carried by gale winds surrounded them.

WEARY FIREFIGHTER watches silently as flames creep toward him and his home. Grey smoke silhouettes rich timber stands that by now are nothing more than blackened ruins. At least two homes burned near Wanham.

700 Battle Bush Fires

Battling rising fire hazard caused by warm temperatures and drought conditions, more than 700 Alberta firefighters Saturday continued to combat more than 30 bush fires in northern Alberta, attempting to keep them from large timber areas, farm homes, crops and small towns. Only two fires have been brought under control in the past 24 hours, although firefighters have gained the upper hand in several others.

Two new fires in the Lac La Biche area were reported overnight to forestry officials and men and equipment were being hurried to the scenes.

Alberta's fire picture, according to veteran forestry officials, is more alarming than serious. Most of the fires are in brush and have not entered timber. In some cases, the blazes have come close to settlements, but most of these have been controlled before any serious damage was done.

The fire situation is described by officials as the worst in 20 years during the fall season, due to the dryness and warm weather. The actual loss in dollars and cents has not been as great as in some other years.

Worst fire is at Wanham. It has swept in the past few days over a large area, destroyed farm homes, cattle, crops and machinery.

Reinforced by bulldozers, water tanks and machinery for Canada's greatest land clearing project, residents of the Wanham district 340 miles northwest of Edmonton fought an all-night battle.

Al Fimrite, Wanham businessman, and Stan Carter, superintendent of the Wanham soldier settlement project, obtained seven bulldozers and two truck watering tanks from the O. B. Lassiter land clearing contract 25 miles away. The big machines were driven all night to the scene of the blaze by crews which had first put in a full day's work. They arrived about 3:00 a.m., Saturday.

Arrival of machinery gave the firefighters new hope that the blaze could be brought under control at the week-end. The machines will knock down dangerous stands of trees and throw up new fire guards.

After fighting the Wanham fire for many hours, Forest Ranger Sherman Willis was forced to leave early Saturday for Spirit River, where another outbreak was reported.

Another danger area is the Heart Valley district south of Wanham. A report on this fire was not available after Friday's increase in wind strength.

In the Wanham area, one of the most serious spots was at the McVittie farm, evacuated for the second time Friday. Again the

flames encircled the farm yard, but the house and buildings, including a full granary, were saved. The Simpson and Curly families also had to evacuate their farm homes a second time. Evacuees and homeless are living in emergency shelter in Wanham, and with friends.

The Canadian Red Cross came to the immediate aid of the Benson and Tansum families, burned

out in the Wanham fire. Red Cross food and clothing parcels began arriving Friday for those families, left without even furniture.

Only the fact that the wind dies each night is allowing the weary but willing Wanham firefighters to stay abreast of the persistent fire.

After 10 days had passed, preparations were made for our flight to Whitehorse. Betty slept most of the time except between stops, which were Fort St. John, Fort Nelson and Watson Lake. Albert was very air sick, but the Captain of the plane was most helpful and helped me off and on with my kids and all my baby aids for Betty. There were no stewardesses. Finally, after 10 hours, including stop overs, we arrived at Whitehorse where Del was waiting for us.

The next morning we started on our 170 mile drive to Kluane Lake. The scenery was beautiful along our way, and on arrival I was very pleased to find our house had an oil stove for heat and running water, complete with a shower. I found out later that our house was one of several homes that were provided by the U.S. Army for their personnel, while the Alaska Highway was being built.

I was kept busy with Betty, and Albert started school at Destruction Bay. There was very little maintenance work for Del to do at the shop across the highway from our house. One of Del's duties was to service the generators daily to keep the lights operational at the Burwash Landing strip, some 12 miles away. One evening on his way back from Burwash he shot a grizzly bear.

BEDROCK BREAD WITH RAISINS

A grocery truck came from Whitehorse once a month with supplies that we had ordered the previous month. So I had to try my hand at baking bread, but it turned out like cement. Then Del told me he and his brother Dick batched all one winter in a little log shack on the Louis Tansem quarter and how well they ate; so Del proceeded to show me the secret of baking *GOOD* bread. Still feeling ashamed of my complete *FLOP*, I watched him carefully. He tested the water temperature for the yeast, warmed the flour, added salt and sugar, then mixed it and kneaded it to the right consistency and finally placed it in a warm spot to rise.

The next couple of hours were spent peeking under the towel to see if it was rising. With every peek the reply was the same. No change in its shape, so Del decided to rework it and place it into pans. Again, it was placed in a warm spot to rise. And again the next hour or two was spent peeking under the towel to see how much it had risen. But still very little change, if any, in the shape of the loaves. By this time it was midnight so into the oven went the four loaves of bread. After 1 hour of baking these oval flatsided objects thundered out of the pans and onto the cupboard like *ROCKS*.

A day or so later I mustered up enough courage to try again to bake bread. This time it was *REALLY* going to be good. I'd add raisins.

I went through the same procedure, warm water, warm flour, sugar and salt and washed raisins. Mixed to the right texture, these ingredients were again set in a warm place to rise.

When Del came home for dinner that day, he announced we were leaving. This really was no big surprise to me as Del, being the ambitious type, soon became bored not having enough to do. So I immediately began packing. By 5 o'clock that same day we had packed all

our earthly belongings (including my heavy raisin bread) into our 1941 Coupe and Albert, Betty, Del and I were on our way, ending our two month stay in the Yukon.

As I mentioned previously, there were no hotels or motels along the dusty winding road so before darkness fell we stopped along the Alaska Highway and made a bed for ourselves, outside under the stars beside the car. Betty slept on the shelf of the Coupe car and Albert slept on the seat.

I recall I didn't sleep much as I didn't relish the idea of waking up to a Grizzly bear smelling my toes. I mentioned this to Del, so he got up and took his gun from the car and placed it under his pillow. It was comforting to know the kids had the car for protection.

There were emergency shelters every 50 miles along the Alaska Highway. These consisted of a big barrel stove and a pile of wood and a little shack for wind protection. No food. We had to have permission from the police to travel the Alaska Highway.

We were three days travelling on the dusty Alaska Highway but Betty never missed her daily bath. Del would make a bon fire and heat water and I would place her in a flat pan and wash her all over. At night when we stopped, I would wash her diapers and hang them on some bushes to dry overnight.

Our first stop at Wanham was with Esther and Lyssggard Christensen. They made us very welcome and were quite taken with Betty and her bed on the shelf in our coupe car. I can well recall Del bringing out our surplus food that we didn't eat while on our way down the Alaska Highway, which included two loaves of my heavy raisin bread. Imagine my embarrassment when Lusco, Jim Rutherford and Del were digging out the raisins from my heavy bread with a screwdriver. I still don't know to this day whether Niffy, Christensen's dog, ate the remains or not. They all kept telling me constantly the raisins were good.

We spent several days with the Christensen family who were very hospitable, helpful and kind to all of us.

Cliff Tansem gave us permission to move into the Emil Bodie house, where we spent the summer. Esther gave us vegetables from their garden and milk for Albert and Betty. Albert and Betty were always so pleased to see Auntie Esther and Uncle Lusco. Esther showed me how to make beet pickles that summer and brought me some of her jars to pickle them in.

Del decided he wanted to go farming, so he sold our 1941 coupe Ford car to Lusco and bought a cow called Leggie from Carl Erstad, a team of horses called Doll and Jiggs from Lawrence Leriger and also a wagon. He borrowed a bundle rack from Lusco Christensen and went to work that fall on Walter Stepaniuk's threshing outfit. That summer, 1946, Del had filed on a 1/2 section of land from the Veteran's Land Act, which was the former Gus Thorin farm. We received a letter from the V.L.A. to appear before their board for an interview at Spirit River. Our assets were the recently acquired team of horses, harness and wagon, plus one milk cow. Mr. George MacDonald was one of the board members. He knew Del was a hard worker, as he had hired him on previous occasions and that was really all we had. I doubt very much if it had not been for Mr. MacDonald putting

in a good word for Del, that we would have acquired that land.

That same summer we somehow scraped up enough money to buy Betty a high chair from Eaton's for \$3.50. It was a great convenience for me to have Betty sit in her own high chair. That chair is still usable today (34 years later).

HIGHER CEILING OR SHORTER WOMAN

In November of 1946 we received permission from the V.L.A. to move onto our half section of land. The old log house was in poor condition, but Del resingled the roof and raised the ceiling before we moved in. Del often chided me about the big decision he had to make: 'either raise the ceiling or get a shorter woman'. My brother Lou helped us move in. My first cupboards were made from four orange crates and two apple boxes. The orange crates made much better cupboards, as they had a wooden divider in the centre which served as a ready made shelf. We bought a table for \$1.00 and an old cook stove from Gehard Wrolson for \$15.00. The fire box was burnt through letting the ashes fall into the oven. By this time things were looking brighter. I had learned to make edible bread.

We slept on a Winnipeg couch and the kids, Albert and Betty, slept on the bare board floor. Our chairs were the extremely sturdy type - large blocks of unsplit fire wood. By this time we had acquired a pig, and some neighbor gave us a hen and her brood of chickens.

That winter Del cut down big trees, limbed and loaded the huge logs and hauled them into town, through the deep drifted snow with the team, Doll and Jiggs, for the mere sum of \$6.00 per load.

The floor in our log house was pretty cold, so Del made Betty a crib from the straw deck of an old threshing machine. He made a very good job of it. I painted it and put decals on the head and foot panels so it was a great improvement over the floor.

Albert got promoted to the Winnipeg couch, as somewhere along the way someone gave us a bed and mattress.

We always had plenty to eat, for Del was a great hunter and always kept us well supplied with moose meat.

I can well recall the first time I went down to the dam to get water. I looked at all those little bugs squirming around the edges and returned to tell Del that the water was unfit to use. His reply was, "If it doesn't kill the bugs it won't hurt you." But I soon learned how to strain the water and shake the bugs off the strainer after each pail-full I placed into the big 45 gallon barrel. In the winter we moved the big barrel inside and melted snow. That was Albert's job, to keep the barrel filled with snow and get in the wood. Melted snow made lovely soft water and the clothes came out so much whiter with it, than they did using the water from the dam. Our dam was so close to our house I was constantly watching out the window for fear the kids would fall in.

In the winter Del cut big blocks of ice and hauled them into our ice house. We were fortunate to have an ice house already built by the former owners. It was a great God-send in the hot summer weather, and the ice would

last almost all summer long.

I got my first washing machine in the fall of 1946. Del purchased it from Ed Prevost for \$189.50 plus \$3.00 freight charges. It was a gas-engined Beatty, with a green enameled tub. I was so tickled with that machine even though I had to leave the door open, as the exhaust pipe had to be placed outside. Before that I washed for the four of us by hand which was a big job, especially when you are very young and green at housekeeping.

We visited back and forth with Bertha and Harry Cameron and their two children Donna and Louise. I remember how much I enjoyed their visits. Del would fry moose steaks and I would look after the rest of the meal. For dessert we would have homemade ice cream. This was made from a cooked custard to which rich thick cow's cream was added. A partial block of ice was taken from the ice house, crushed in a gunny sack by pounding it with an axe — until it became small enough to be poured between the metal canister-type container and the wooden outer pail. The metal dasher with wooden blades was then placed into the mixture, the metal lid placed on top, with the centre rod projecting through the lid into a cluster of gears which drove the dasher back and forth inside the cream and custard mixture. This cluster of gears was fastened by a steel arm to the outer side of the wooden pail and was turned by a handle. Salt was sprinkled into the crushed ice to hasten the freezing and after approximately 30 to 40 minutes of hand cranking we would have delicious rich homemade ice cream.

The cows always gave more milk in the summer, when they pastured on good green grass. If Del was busy working in the fields I would do the milking. We were fortunate as we almost always had gentle cows and easy milkers. Sometimes it was necessary to place the 'cow-kickers' on their legs, especially if their teats became chapped or cut from going through barbed wire fences. It was most discouraging, after you had sat for 8 or 10 minutes squeezing out a pail full of milk to have the cow lift her leg and tip over your pail. Other times the cow would just lift her leg and place it in your pail of milk. Either way you were out your milk - plus a damaged milk pail. A good tin milk pail with a wooden handle was \$1.25. The wooden handle was quite a convenience as without it, carrying a full pail of milk any distance became very hard on the hands. If and when you succeeded in getting the milk from the cow, and from the barn into the house, it had to be strained. I recall using a special type of sack - not flour sacks - they were too coarsely woven - but rolled oat sacks and sugar sacks for strainers. These were machine stitched across and down one side by the factory and, if you cut a few stitches at the proper end, they would unravel and give you a rectangular piece of cloth. After several washings and boilings, out would come the colored picture of Little John and the black ink letters marked Rolled Oats. Place this strainer over half the top of your pail of milk, stretch it tightly and lift the pail to pour it into a large, clean crock. This vessel was left to stand for 24-36 hours. We couldn't afford a hand separator. By this time the cream would all rise to the top and I would skim off the cream into another container. This procedure took place twice a day - morning and night. The cream had to be well stirred

after each addition of fresh cream. The milk pails had to be washed and scalded after every use, as well as the strainers. How lucky we were to have an ice house even if it was 100 feet from the house. It was Albert's job to run the milk and cream, and all other food that required a cool place, back and forth.

MAKING BUTTER

About once a week the crock would become full enough to churn into butter. The crock was then taken from the ice house into the house. A circle of wood with an inch hole in it acted as the lid for the churn and the dasher was a wooden cross attached to the broom-like handle. Each time the handle was raised the dasher passed through the cream. This up and down movement was all done by hand. This was a very tedious task which sometimes took from 6 to 10 hours. The temperature of the cream played a big part in how long it took to churn into butter, but we had no way of testing the temperature so it was generally done by feeling the outside of the crock. All the family would take their turn at this monotonous job. It was not unusual for Del to have to go at it when he came home for supper even though the cream had been brought in just after breakfast that day. We kept a watchful eye on that cream. It was a great encouragement to see the cream swell in volume and become heavier. You knew then the big gobs of yellow butterfat would soon appear. Then came the task of separating the butter from the buttermilk. You drained off as much as you could, but many times the butter was too soft to work so back it had to go - the 100 feet across the yard to the ice house. After 2 to 3 hours you'd check to see if it was harder and if it was - out it would come - through the two ice house doors to the kitchen table, dumped into a large wooden butter bowl and worked with a wooden butter paddle. The wooden bowl and paddle had to be first rinsed in cold water to prevent the butter from sticking to the wood. You worked the butter to remove as much of the buttermilk as possible. Then you poured cold water over the butter and reworked it. This was repeated until the water remained clear. Sometimes this took as many as five washings. Oft times the butter would become too soft to work and again it would have to be returned to the outdoor ice house. It was very important to get all the water out of the butter. One teaspoon of salt was added for each pound of butter. The salt also had to be worked well into the butter or else you would have streaked butter. If you hurried you could mould the butter into pounds before it became too soft. These pound moulds were also made of wood. After rinsing it in cold water you would press the butter into the mould until it was full - without any air pockets. A special type of butter paper was used to wrap these moulds of butter. It was also run through cold water and placed on the table. You pressed out the moulded pound of butter onto the paper and wrapped it up. This was repeated until you ran out of butter usually ending up with a batch of 6 or 7 pounds of butter. Any extra we used on saucers for our table. Then the pounds of butter were placed inside the ice house to keep cold.

I remember selling butter to Sandercock's store for 30¢

per pound and considering myself lucky to get such a good price.

Del's brother Dick and his wife, Edna, visited us that summer. They had come by car from Vancouver and got stuck about a mile from our place. I guess things must have looked pretty rough at our place, as I remember Dick saying, "You'd better pack it up kids, and come back with us". But we were young and happy on the farm.

In the spring of 1947, my brother Lou and Del broke 18 acres of land. Lou bought a steel wheeled John Deere tractor and they used it to break the sod and disc and seed the 18 acres to flax. The rains came at the right time and the flax crop looked lovely. By August it had grown to a good height. I remember one morning Mrs. Bush, our neighbor to the east, walked over to tell me some horses were in our lovely crop of flax. I left Albert to look after Betty, and Mrs. Bush and I returned to the field. We finally chased out the horses. I visited with Mrs. Bush at the gate post for a few minutes, and I've often thought how kind that was of Mrs. Bush to make the effort to walk all that way to tell us our flax was being trampled by those horses.

Mrs. Cornelious Olson also walked three miles to visit me and welcome me into the district. Then walked three miles back home again. These good neighbors gave their time and effort, and their thoughtful gestures still stand out in my mind today. Another lady I recall was Mrs. Minnie Tansem. She sent Del and me a little wedding gift when we lived in Edmonton, and to this day my conscience bothers me as I didn't even send her a thank you. Pete Tansem would always ask me if I was Mrs. Wellski whenever I would go into his butcher shop.

We were completely surrounded by bachelors, or so it seemed to me. Albert Olsen lived south of us and Frank Grey lived across the road. Some of the first people I met were bachelors. Carl Erstad and Joe Myres were old time bachelor friends of the Wells' family. Then came Louie Tansem and Guy Norton, Oscar Oakleaf, Sam Kenney, Charlie Geller and Bernard Smith. Further east there was George Bolduc and Fred Carpenter. I was quite amazed at the number of unmarried men in the district. So I was always pleased to visit with a woman.

A short time after we moved into the Gus Thorin farm, Frank Grey sold his farm to another bachelor, Allen Graham. Mr. and Mrs. Nick Pisarchuk were our closest married neighbors. They were a very hard working couple, whose children were all grown and had left home. We sometimes caught a ride into town with them. They had a very spirited black team and quite often this team would run away from Mr. Pisarchuk, right through a closed gate, tear down the fence and break their harness, and whatever they were hitched to.

In August, 1947, I went into Grande Prairie with my brother Lou and his girlfriend Dora to see Dr. Carlisle. He informed me we were to have an addition to the family in October. and sure enough, our baby boy, Dale, arrived October 7.

Albert and Betty stayed with Uncle Lusco and Auntie Esther while I was in Grande Prairie Hospital. When I came home Del had put a brick chimney in our little, low, log house and had made me some shelves underneath. I

was so happy as I could put several things away on those three shelves, then close the door.

A while later Allen Graham sold his farm to Lusco Christensen and my brother Lou purchased Albert Olsen's land. So Albert Olsen moved across the road from us, as the Christensens gave him the house to live in, and the yard for his garden. I remember buying raspberries from Albert Olsen and also rhubarb. He had a nice big patch of raspberries and spent many hours caring for them. Albert Olsen would visit us daily in the winter time and always forecasted the weather by the way, (and I quote) "the clouds were oozing up in the west".

Del purchased an 8 ft. pull-type Massey combine that fall from Octave Prevost. He harvested our flax crop and also did some custom combining for neighbors in the district.

The winter of 1948, Del ran a D8 cat on the Lassiter Project clearing land. The kids and I stayed on the farm, and between Albert and I, we milked the cow and did whatever other chores had to be done.

GROCERY TRIP

Every two weeks we would have to go to town for groceries. The grocery list contained just the bare essentials - sugar, flour, salt, coffee and kerosene. The night before I would place four bricks into the oven, in preparation for the trip to town the next day. The sleigh box floor was covered with nice, clean straw and a tarp was tied over the box to keep out the wind and snow. Albert would miss school that day so he could stay with Betty and Dale while I harnessed the horses at the barn and hooked them to the sleigh. Then I would drive them into the yard by the house and tie them to a post while I got the hot bricks out of the oven, wrapped them in several pages of the Free Press, and placed them in the bottom of the sleigh box on the straw. Albert would help me dress Betty and Dale and carry out extra blankets for the long cold trip into town. When everyone was settled around the hot bricks we'd start off. It took the best part of two hours to get through the deep drifted snow. On one occasion I thought the snow was going to come right into the sleigh box, it pushed so high, but the horses finally lunged their way through. The return trip was always made faster. For one reason, the horses had a trail to follow and another reason was the horses were more anxious to get home than they were to go into town. My hands would become numb from the cold, trying to hold back on the reins to keep the horses from running. Albert would spell me off for a ways. They were a very spirited team and in no time Doll would be galloping, so I would have to take over and try to hold them back. Del never let his horses run in the winter as the cold air was injurious to their lungs. When we arrived home Albert would stay with Betty and Dale in the house until I got the horses unhooked, unharnessed and fed. By this time, it was nearly dark, thus ended our day. We were well supplied with all the essentials for another two or three weeks.

In the spring of 1949, Del broke some more land on our half section and seeded it to wheat. We were kept very busy and didn't take much time off for pleasure. But somehow we always found time to take in the Teepee

Creek Sports, which was held the first part of July every year.

On August 1, Gerald Wayne was born in the Grande Prairie Hospital.

That fall our nice big barn burnt to the ground. Mr. Olson sighted the flames first and came running over to wake us up. We lost all our feed (that Albert Olsen and I had pitched into the hayloft) and a yearling heifer. Del ran down, cut loose the team of horses that were tied in the barn, got our cows out, and also a pig and the harness. Joe Myres heard about our loss and came down with a truck load of green feed for our cows the next day.

That same fall Del sold his pull type combine to the Rosinskys in Heart Valley and bought a new Case threshing machine from Ken Waters. He hired Mr. Richard Johnson to run the threshing machine and he threshed that year for 21 days without a stop. Some of his teamsters with bundle racks were Carlo Jacobsen, John Manzulenko, Hans Hansen, Harry Cameron and Norman Olson, Emil Bush and Clarence Tansem.

Esther Christensen helped me with the cooking for the threshers that fall. They were only at our place a couple of days but I don't know what I would have done without her help. Breakfast was at 6:45 a.m., then coffee and lunch was taken out to the field at 10:00 a.m. Dinner - the table just groaned with food at noon. A big lunch was again taken out to the field at 3:30 p.m. and a huge hearty supper at 7:00 p.m. It takes a lot of food to feed a dozen hungry, hard-working men.

We also became very close to Phyllis and Gordon MacDonald and Ken and Judy. We visited back and forth, and when I took sick with the mumps Phyllis took Dale and Gerald home with her. She also insisted on taking home all my washing. She returned it all washed and ironed and I still remember how grateful I was for her efforts.

These were the kind of neighbors we were so fortunate to have. People who gave of themselves by their efforts of kindness, were priceless.

I would like to mention each and everyone that helped us but neither time nor space permits. However, I want you all to know your thoughtfulness and good deeds are still remembered. Whether it was a visit from Ella Olson or Betty Olson or Margaret Christensen - they all helped make my life a little brighter. This was especially true the time Margaret spotted Mr. Albert Olsen's chewing gum, which was stuck on the front of his cap!

Lusco Christensen was our family barber. He tried his hand at teaching me to cut hair, but he was so good at it Del wouldn't let me practice on his head. Lusco gave me a pair of clippers - which I still have and I would trim Dale and Gerald's hair, but that became a No-No as the boys vanity took over.

The spring of 1950, Del put a down payment on the school quarter just north of Chris Bankhead's. The money came from the insurance we got from the barn fire.

That spring we cleared and broke 46 acres. Del cleared it with a brushcutter he, Lusco, and Al rigged on a John Deere tractor he purchased from Eric Sevre. The kids and I would go with Del and spend the day picking up sticks the tractor missed. I took plenty of food along and also

lots of blankets and diapers, as Gerald was still a baby. I'd cover his basket with cheese cloth to keep the mosquitos off. After many days passed, Del finally got it worked and harrowed and seeded.

THE FIRE

September 21, 1950, was a warm windy day. It had been a very dry fall. The crops were thin due to the lack of moisture. Del had just come into the yard pulling the threshing machine with the tractor, but why was he parking it in the middle of our ploughed field? I had my little log house neat and clean, and was about to start sewing, when Del rushed through the door and said a raging forest fire had crossed the road south of town and had burnt out the Bensen family and that we were right in it's path. I quickly took the kids over to Esther and Lusco Christensens with our truck but by the time I got back, the barn in Mr. Albert Olsen's yard was on fire. Sparks were flying all over, so we immediately started a bucket brigade from the dam to the house to keep the shingles damp. In no time a group of neighbors gathered and both Mr. Olsen's house and ours were being watered down. Next came the news that Dora and Art Tansem's house had fallen prey to the raging flames. Immediately everyone started to empty our house of all it's contents. Everything was placed in the centre of the ploughed field. Bernie Archer came across Mrs. Bush's field with a D8 cat to help fight the fire and just as he was passing through Mrs. Bush's yard a spark had started one of her sheds afire. The high winds were simply acting as a big fan, carrying the sparks for miles.

Some of our granaries were full so Del got permission to haul it into the elevator in town. Grain quotas were on but since this was an emergency, grain quotas were ignored. Several of the neighbors trucks hauled out our grain as quickly as possible. The winds receded in the evening but a close watch had to be kept on the whole area in case flames would break out in a straw stack or manure pile. Some of the men that partrolled the three farm yards were Albert Leriger, Paul Leriger, Ken Waters, Bernie Archer and Del. Their eyes became very sore from being constantly in the smoke and dust. Trix Willis was the forest ranger, and he gathered up men to help fight this terrible forest fire. Food supplies were brought in and Dora McVittie offered to cook for the fire fighters. She and some other women fed 60 men at relays from our little log shack. Our yard and the dirt roads were covered in 3 inches of loose powdery dust, caused from all the traffic. After the fourth day, we decided it was safe to begin the task of returning all our belongings to our log house. Our bedding was saturated with this loose flour-like dust. Paul Leriger helped us move back. We really appreciated all the help the Leriger boys gave us. It was always a pleasure to visit with Mrs Leriger. They were such hospitable people, and I must say Albert and Terry have done an excellent job carrying on the family tradition. Ken and Elsie Waters were a great help to us during the fire, as well as so many other good people.

Gordon and Phyllis MacDonald decided to have a sale in the fall of 1952. This was a great shock to us as they



Albert's 12th Birthday. Albert, Alec Posty and Gordon Olson standing beside the summer mode of transportation.

were some of our best friends. Their kids, Ken and Judy, were much the same age as our Betty and Dale, so we missed them all very much.

On New Year's Day, 1953, we moved into Gordon and Phyllis's house. Del had rented their land and our kids had only 1 mile to walk from this house to catch the school bus, whereas they had two miles to walk from our log house. Emil Bolduc helped us move.

I was tickled pink with Phyllis's little house. It had so many windows compared to my old log shack. It also had a big porch thus giving us lots more room.



Albert, Betty and Dale with pets.

HOME IN THE SPRUCE

We lived there nearly two years. During that time Del purchased the old Louie Tansem quarter from a Mr. Eides in B.C. I loved the large grove of spruce, trees and many times I mentioned to Del what a lovely building spot it would make. Oft times the kids and I would get off at this lovely grove of spruce, while Del continued on into town to do his business. By the time Del returned we

would have a huge pile of dead-fall and underbrush ready to be burnt. Del would light the pile; then out came the weiners for the weiner roast. Precaution had to be taken as to when and where we lit these piles. They could only be burnt when the snow was on the ground and on a calm day. I loved working there as there was always a circle of bare ground around each spruce tree. The squirrels chattered as they jumped back and forth between each tree. They were such cute little creatures with their bushy perky tails. The kids tamed one which became quite a family pet.

After many hours of grubbing out stumps and picking up sticks (Del did most all the grubbing by hand), we had a place large enough for a house. However, a driveway had to be built and a culvert dug into place across the ditch. By this time the Department of Highways had built a high gravel grade along that portion of the road. But, by and by these things came to pass. In 1954 Del purchased Gordon and Phyllis's house and moved it with a D8 cat. All the contents were left inside the house and coffee was served on the move. Slowly our newly purchased home came to rest among the spruce trees. Al Elhorn, Mr. McDonald and Carl Erstad were some of the fellows that were in on that task.

In 1960 we purchased a large house in Spirit River and brought it down to replace the little one we brought from Phyllis and Gordon. This house from Spirit River had 28 wheels underneath it. A big basement was built and many of our good neighbors helped us pour cement for that big basement. The house was then moved onto the basement. Harry Boorman was the carpenter that made the basement to fit the house, and he did a splendid job. We remodeled the upstairs, and we had our kitchen cupboards built by a young Spirit River fellow named Bill Zyha. Those cupboards are still in excellent shape today. We were very fortunate to have Howard McPherson finish our rumpus room. We had many good times in that room. It held square dances, anniversary parties, music practices, and just ordinary parties. Our kids, Betty and

Dale, helped supply the music as did George Shea and Carl Osbak. Bernadette Shea's singing was also very much appreciated. Other times Jim Porterfield from Spirit River supplied us with good lively dance music. Mike Uhryn (a local teacher), Earl Lang and Leonard Rottacker practised at our house and would often play for the Pioneer Lodge in Spirit River.

Carl Erstad really liked to hear them play and was so pleased whenever they would come.

Time passed and the children grew up. Albert and Shirley got married in 1965 and now have three boys: Ricky, Wayne and Darrel. They have the U.F.A. bulk service in Wanham.

Betty is still single and loves working with horses as much as ever.

Dale attended Grande Prairie College the first year it opened, and also received his private pilot's license. Flying had priority over college, so Dale furthered his flying training.

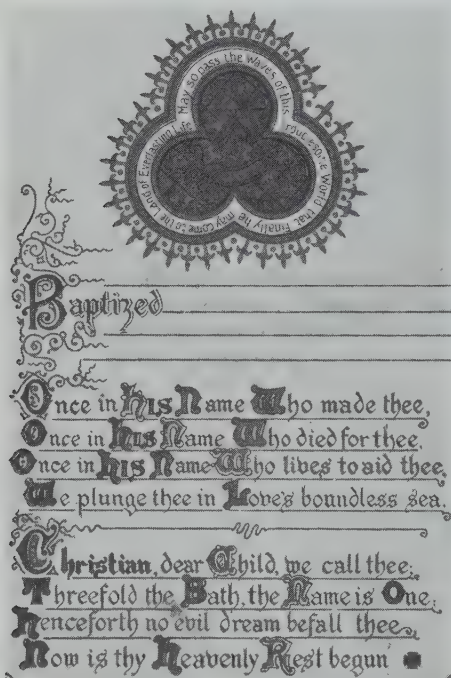
In 1969 I obtained my private pilots license, and in 1970 Del bought a plane. I used to fly up to Grande Prairie, take Dale's truck downtown (Dale at that time was flying for Liberty Airways in Grande Prairie), do my shopping and fly back to our strip on the farm.

Our mode of transportation had changed considerably in less than 20 years - from driving horses in 1950 to flying an aircraft in 1970!

In 1972 Dale, Del, and I formed WAPITI AVIATION LTD. and still operate that business. Dale and Audrey were married in April, 1974, and reside in Grande Prairie.

We had a farm sale in the spring of 1975, and now reside in Grande Prairie. Gerald rents our 1/2 section across the road from the old farmstead.

Gerald and Bev were married in the spring of 1971 and have two children, Ryan and Stacey. They purchased the old farmstead, and it's nice to know that lovely grove of spruce trees are still in the family.



Wapiti Aviation in Grande Prairie, operated by Del, Fran and Dale Wells.

THE DELBERT WELLS SR. FAMILY

by Fran Wells

Delbert Wells first arrived in the Grizzly Prairie area in the summer of 1918 from Plentiwood, Montana, U.S.A. Rumors of the rich land in the Peace River country, plus the fact that Maude's doctor suggested she move to a

different climate, prompted Delbert to load all their belongings into a box car and come north. Some of those possessions were 3 head of horses, harness, a wooden wheeled wagon, mower and rake, a Kalamazoo Cookstove and a New Brunswick Sewing Machine. Delbert rode in the box car with his horses, as they had to be cared for during the several days train trip from Montana to Grizzly Prairie. Delbert was noted for his teamster abilities and was always known to have a good bunch of horses. He got a job hauling logs with his team and wagon at McCrimmon's mill located in Birch Hills, approximately 9 miles east and 4 miles south of the N.A.R. siding. There were no roads, only bush trails through muskegs and slough, but wild animals of every species were in abundance.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

This will be authority for Mr. Delbert WELLS and family to travel over the Alaska Highway between Destruction Bay, Y.T. and Whitehorse, Y.T. Will be travelling via Ford Coupe, License No. 399 Yukon Terr.

 Cst.
R.R. Johnson, # 14215.
R.C.M. Police,
Haines Junction Detachment.

NO HOME

Later that same summer, Delbert sent for his wife, Maude and their two children, Hazel, 3 years old, and Delbert Jr. (more commonly known as Sonny), 1 1/2 years. He met them at the N.A.R. Railway siding with his team and wagon, and bounced them over the 13 miles of logs and bogs to his shack at the McCrimmon mill site, only to be refused entry - his wife and family had been exposed to the deadly 1914 - 1918 flu. This highly upset Delbert. Where was he going to put his family? They had to have food and shelter. He returned with his wife and two wee children, over the rough and bouncy winding bush trail to the siding and after much effort got permission to move his wife and family into a small shack on the Oscar Oakleaf quarter - 1 mile west and 1 mile south of Grizzly Prairie.

ONE HAM

He then took a job with the N.A.R. working on the railway tracks, a very heavy, strenuous type of work. About a year later he built a small house beside the railway siding at Wanham. The story goes that a group of railway workers were taking stock of their depleted food supplies. They had only 'One Ham' left - thus gave Wanham it's name.

On Christmas Day, 1919, Dick Wells was born.

Some two years later, Delbert moved their small house from the siding to the farm Delbert homesteaded. The former Well's residence is still standing 2 miles west of

the Wanham corner and 1 mile south, which now forms part of Langnes Farms.

Delbert Wells became section foreman after Andrew Ramsfield left to start a small country store in the Peace River area.

In September of 1925, Ralph Wells was born.

Delbert Wells Jr. (Sonny) started school in 1925. The School Board had difficulty getting the required number of pupils necessary to warrant opening a school at Sunny Slope, so the district of Sunny Slope borrowed a school age child from the Belloy School District.

Delbert's (Sonny) only sister, Hazel, and his two younger brothers, Ralph and Dick, all attended South Slope School.

Delbert (Sonny) was quite a marksman with his six shooter and often shot rabbits and partridges on his way to and from school. During school hours, his 38 Colt Revolver was hidden in the wood pile. Some of his teachers were Miss Hewitt, Mr. McTavish, Miss Wishart and Miss Ford, more commonly known in this era as Mrs. Laura Lampert.

Christmas, at the Well's house, always included the traditional turkey and all the trimmings. Joe Myres and Carl Erstad ate many a Christmas dinner at the Well's table. Gifts were more on the essential line. Hazel told me Ole Tansem (her grandfather by marriage) asked her what she would like for Christmas and her reply was, "Some traps for my trap-line". Hazel, Del (Sonny) and Dick each had their own trap-line. The boys skinned Hazels' catch and in return she would check their trap-line, which sometimes meant miles of walking through knee-deep snow. Care had to be taken not to cut through the skin when skinning the different carcasses, which were mainly weasels and rats. The hides were stretched over thin wooden stretchers made from sides of apple boxes. These stretchers varied in size from small, medium, to large. After the pelts were dried, they were removed from the stretchers and placed away in a dry area. Each Wells had their own stack of pelts and patiently awaited the coming of the fur buyer. Prices ranged from .50¢ to \$1.50 per pelt, depending on condition and quality.

As with all families, the Wells' grew up and each went their different way. Hazel left home and got a job in McLennan, where she met and married her Stan Woznica. Later they moved from McLennan to Nanoose Bay, B.C. They have two children, Wanda and Jack. Wanda married Miller Dufour in 1955 and they have five children. Wanda and Miller reside in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Jack is still a bachelor and lives in Ottawa.

Del (Sonny) and Dick worked for different neighbors, at a very young age. Some of these neighbors were Joe Myres, Carl Erstad, Lysggaard Christensen, George McDonald and the Murphys. Del (Sonny) also worked for Joe Ward in Belloy, and Pete McKnee and Red McLean in Heart Valley. In those days, a day's work started at 5 o'clock in the morning. The horses had to be fed, watered, and curried, before they were harnessed in preparation for their long day of toil in the fields.

Del (Sonny) recalls working on Rols Sequett's threshing outfit with a team and bundle rack, at the age

Family business grows with city

BY LUBA

DZUBAK-PETRYSHYN

Wapiti Aviation is a family affair. Mr. Del Wells, Mrs. Fran Wells, and son Dale Wells have been in the airplane business for only a short while, but they all admit they enjoy it. "We're rather informal around here," Mrs. Wells explained.

The family bought out Liberty Airways in April 1972. That included four planes, a charter service and a pilots' school.

Now Wapiti Aviation has about 15 planes, a busy flight service, a flight school, and scheduled flights. These latter were begun in August 76, and have been undergoing expansion ever since.

Scheduled flights included, at first, one daily flight return from Grande Prairie to Edmonton through Grande Cache. To that were added two daily return flights from Grande Prairie to Edmonton through Whitecourt, operating only on weekdays.

Just last Saturday a new Grande Prairie - Edmonton flight was added to Wapiti Aviation's schedule.

Mr. Dale Wells noted that prices of flights to Edmonton and back were competitive with CP Air and Time Air, "but our times are better," he added.

This weekend Wapiti entered into promotional work

Public flights, for \$5 per person for 15 minutes were arranged. Senior citizens were taken up for free. About 200 people went up, he said.

Promotional flights were conducted only once before and they are planned to be held again. According to Mr. Wells, pilots must be licensed in the carrying of pilots and cargo, and so the weather. Advance advertising is pretty much imposed on the weather.

Mr. Wells said that the weather is a pretty much imposed on the weather. Mr. Wells said that the weather is a pretty much imposed on the weather.

But Wapiti is engaged in oil well servicing flights.

Cost of charter flights runs from 50 cents to \$1.35 a mile from base to base depending on aircraft.

Charters have been flown to Sacramento and Seattle, as well as other places in the United States. Mr. Wells explained that Wapiti has an international charter.

The flight school also attracts many individuals to Wapiti Aviation. In fact, the family has lost count of just how many students have been put through. Dale Wells is a flight test examiner as well as an engineer, a pilot, and an instructor.

Of the 12 pilots working for Wapiti Aviation five are instructors. In 1972 there were only two pilots on the payroll.

But it is the air ambulance service that is most exciting for Dale. "It is most demanding," he noted. Wapiti Aviation's ambulance serves Grande Prairie, Fairview, Spirit River, Grande Cache, Beaverlodge, and has been out as far as Fort Vermilion. On an average two ambulance flights are made a week but when they are made it is quite unpredictable, according to Mr.

Wells.

Wapiti Aviation also provides parking space for planes and service for itinerant aircraft, called a "fix base operator."

The company has no fatal accidents on record except for birds, for which Mr. Wells doesn't apologize. "They are very expensive birds," he said, "they ruin windows, tails, wings."

Why does the family do it? It's fun they said. Even Dale's wife, Audrey works part time at Wapiti Aviation.

Hours of operation are normally 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. but there is usually someone around until 10 p.m. However,

if the weather is bad, the outfit closes earlier.

All services provided by Wapiti Aviation are licensed by the Canadian Transport Commission to add to the Ministry of Transport has provided operating certificates for the services.

As a farm family from Wanham, the Wellses hope to stay in the business for quite a while. They are presently working at expansion the exact nature of which Mr. Dale Wells would not divulge.

A FAMILY AFFAIR - When the Wells family bought out Liberty Airways in 1972 the company was small. Since then there has been nothing but expansion with new services being added constantly. Left to right are Dale, Fran, and Del Wells of Wapiti Aviation.

of 15 years. After the second day, Del's wrists were badly swollen from pitching the heavy bundles onto the high bundle rack, but when you received a man's wages you had to *earn* a man's wages. Joe Ouellett was a field pitcher on the threshing outfit and his duties were to help load the six to eight bundle teams. Del well remembers the much appreciated help Joe gave him to load his rack and keep his place in line with the other older men.

One incident I recall hearing about from John Christensen was the time Del (Sonny) had finished working for Cliff Tansem for the season. Del (Sonny) had packed his few belongings in his pack sack, in readiness for the 5 mile walk back home. While Del was absent for a few minutes, brother Dick and Cliff Tansem decided to play a joke on Del (Sonny), so they quickly placed some rocks inside his pack. Del (Sonny) returned, grabbed his pack sack, swung it onto his back and off he trudged. It wasn't until he reached his home and opened his sack that he discovered why his pack was *SO* heavy.

In late 1937, Del (Sonny) married Thelma Courtmache. They lived for a while with the Senior Wells, then moved to a little shack on the Oscar Oakleaf place. Sometime later, they bought a little house in Wanham from Ray Tansem. In August of 1938, Albert Wells was born. The district nurse, Miss Pickup, was brought to the Senior Wells' residence to assist with the birth. The closest hospital was Spirit River, which was a good 4 hour drive with a spirited team and buggy.

War broke out in 1939 and in 1941 Del (Sonny) joined the army and went overseas. He returned from overseas in 1944, picked up his son Albert in Edmonton, and returned to visit his folks in Wanham.

APRIL FOOL COOKIES

Delbert and Maude Wells were well known for their

generous hospitality. Maude always served afternoon coffee to all their visitors which usually included some homebaked goodies. These invites were always a welcome treat to the numerous bachelors. This particular day was April Fool's Day and Maude made some cookies. To the last portion of dough she added a cup or two of sawdust. When coffee time rolled around she placed a plate of these delicious looking sawdust cookies on the table and called in the men. Guy Norton and Joe Myres both reached for these delicacies, and it was hilarious to see the different grimaces when they tried to bite into these April Fool's cookies. Even dunking didn't help. Needless to say, everyone couldn't help but enjoy the practical joke.

Dick Wells left for work around the Westlock area. About 1936 Dick Wells, Joe Peltier and Gordon Shady built a small boat. They all three set afloat down the mighty Peace River and after making several portages arrived at Yellowknife. Dick found a job in the gold mines and worked there for a while. He later joined the Navy and went overseas in 1944. He returned from overseas and married Edna Boetrill in July 1948. They made Vancouver their home. Dick passed away in February 1973, at the age of 56 years.

Ralph Wells married Ruth Sweet in the early 1940's. She was a teacher at Royal Winner School. They left Wanham and moved to Victoria, B.C. They later divorced. Later Ralph re-married and now has 3 girls, Sharon, Darelene and Pat, and 1 boy, Michael. He still resides in B.C.

In 1945, Delbert and Maude Wells had a farm sale. They sold their homesteaded land to Nick Duby. They moved to Nanaimo, B.C. and went into a small store business. In October of 1948, Delbert Wells passed away in a Nanaimo hospital at the age of 56 years. Maude still resides in Parksville, B.C.

BETTY WELLS

The Wells family had long been on the scene in the Wanham area before I arrived. Our first permanent home in the district was on the Thorin quarter. However, we did spend a couple of temporary months living in Martin Bode's shack. Mother thought this three room log cabin a mansion. At this time there was only me and my older brother, Albert. I was about a year old. In 1947 Dale was born and nearly 2 years later another brother, Gerald. Space was soon at a premium so Dad built bunk beds for Dale and me, and replaced the apple boxes in the kitchen with cupboards for mother.

CHORES

As long as I can remember we (my brothers and I) were assigned jobs and had a steady diet of chores until we left home. Mother, the organizer, dictated these chores according to size and age, in an effort to make responsible citizens out of four 'rangatangs'. As I think back, my oldest brother, Albert, carried the heaviest load. Milking the cows, separating the milk, carrying water, chopping wood, filling coal-oil lamps, plus helping Daddy in the fields, are just a few that stand out in my mind. My first chore was cleaning the wash basin and soap dish. Dale packed the wood in and usually tried to get the dog to help him.

In the fall of 1950 I started school, walking two miles with Albert to catch the school bus. The winters were tough and many times Albert would drag me through waist high snow drifts.

Money was scarce, so Dad went to work leaving Mum to care for the livestock and look after 'us kids'. About every two weeks we would hitch up the team and sleigh and go into Wanham, which was 4 1/2 miles away. My brothers and I were warmly snuggled under the canvass. Mum had heated bricks and wrapped them in newspaper to provide warmth from sub zero cold. Though the days were short and the nights long and cold, our family struggled through these times without the modern conveniences that we take for granted today. Groceries were only the bare necessities like flour, coffee, sugar, as mother canned everything from wild fruit, vegetables to moose meat. Without the use of electricity keeping food was a problem. An annual event was sawing large blocks of ice and storing them in the ice house under sawdust. This was done around the end of March and the ice usually lasted through the summer - serving as our refrigerator. When company came, we would have homemade ice cream. This was a real treat for us.

In 1950 a terrible forest fire burned out of control in the Birch Hills just behind our house. Our next door neighbor, Albert Olsen, lost his barn. Our house was constantly soaked with water, and I can still see our furniture standing in the middle of the plowed field. Mum sent us kids over to Christensens, where we would be safe and out of the way.

In 1953, our family moved again to Gordon McDonald's farm which my father rented. The McDonalds had moved to Edmonton where Gordon resumed flying.

A few months later Gordon flew a mercy flight out of Grande Prairie to Edmonton with a polio patient, in a heroic effort to save the patient's life. My dad lost his best friend as the plane crashed outside of Whitecourt, but wasn't found until a year later. The search lasted several months and at that time was the biggest ever in the north.

Living on McDonald's farm had many improvements for our family. The house was much bigger. I had my first bedroom all to myself. My brothers had to share one. Although we were farther from Wanham, we were much closer to highway No. 49, giving us only one mile of walking to catch the school bus. A few years later Dad bought the house and moved it to a lovely grove of spruce trees on the old Louis Tansem quarter, which was just next door to Clifford and Molly Tansem's place. Now we were right by the highway, only 1 1/2 miles from Wanham. Mother loved the surroundings here - the large spruce trees at the back of the house and the poplars out front shielding the highway. This was the last move and the place I will always call home. Later Dad skidded the barn he bought from Gordon McDonald over, which is still there. A couple of years later we bought a very large house in Spirit River and moved it to the farm. This storey and a half home was the largest building we moved, and is presently on the farm. With hours of fencing, brushing and picking sticks, we slowly turned this raw quarter into a farmyard.

I am now living and working in Calgary. I am still a horsewoman and attend horse shows.

By the time we moved into our big house brought down from Spirit River, my older brother, Albert, had left home and joined the army. I was next to leave the fold, after finishing school, and I got my first job as a Dental Assistant in High Prairie. Of course, the next to leave was my horse, as wherever I go I manage to drag a horse with me. Dale decided to work a couple years, after he graduated, then enrolled in university, only to give it up for flying. Gerald, who was a farmer at heart, had been willed a quarter section at age 12 from a dear friend of the family, Carl Erstad. Gerald has never really wanted to do anything else but farm.

GEORGE WENDLAND

I was born in Hinkley, Minnesota, U.S.A. in 1910. I was only 3 years old when my parents, Charles and Frieda Wendland, moved to Beiseker, Alberta. When I was 18, my dad and uncle came to the Peace River country to look for land for John and me. Dad took a homestead for John in Peoria and we moved up the following year, 1929.

PRAIRIE TO BUSH

We came by freight train with 4 horses and machinery, etc., to Wanham. We slept in Ralph Pickard's garage, up in the attic the first night, and started for Peoria the next morning. That was something to remember - when you came from the prairies; ground hogs to bush. It was just a trail through sloughs, brush and mosquitoes. We finally

made it, John and I. John decided he didn't like the homestead so I took it, and John got one nearer Peoria. Mine is farther south. My neighbours were all bachelors - Morris Griffith, his brother Ralph, Charlie Leggatt, Jack Payne, George Laughland and Jack, Allan Graham, Russel Bell, Wilbor Stirling, Anton Kozak, Sandy Laughland and Art Tansem. Every quarter section seemed to have someone on it. I can't forget Alfred Amundson. I batched for 9 years. Those were quite the years.

I met Anne in 1937. Two week's later we were married and I took her out to the homestead. We started with 40 acres in crop and the rest bush. I cleared the rest of the quarter section by hand, except the last 30 acres, which Art Bohnke came and brushed with a Cat.

Our first daughter, Betty, was born in November, 1937; Garry in 1939; Frances in 1942; Diane in 1945 and Marilyn in 1949. There was no school near, so the neighbors and I got the logs out and hauled them to W.J.



George and Anne's first home - 1931.

Rottackers mill and donated the lumber for our first school, which was called East Peoria. It was built in 1942. Our first teacher was Amanda Kandt.

Those first years were lots of hard work. I started with 4 horses, 1 milk cow and a dozen chickens. We had a two room house made of lumber. The barn was logs, with a straw roof. Wilbor Stirling had a threshing machine, so the neighbors would help him and get their's threshed for helping.

Later I got my own machine and did some custom work.

In 1955 I bought Allen Graham's half section, which my brother Art had bought earlier. When he passed on I bought it.

In 1978 we sold the farm and retired to the village of Wanham.

We always had lots to eat as there was lots of wild game. As far as we're concerned moose beats beef any time. We had no power then so no deep freeze, but always canned meat and vegetables, so had lots to eat.

When I first started homesteading it was with horses and walking plows. Clearing land was done, with a grub hoe and axe. Ten to twenty acres of clearing in a year was a good year! Later we started hiring cats to do the 'dirty work' we had done by hand.

I started with 4 horses. When harrowing, I walked up



Anne on "Old Jim" beside their first barn which was built in 1937.

and down the fields behind the horses and harrows. Later on, I built a harrow cart and that was lots better than walking.

The first tractor I had was a steel-wheel John Deere. In 1955, I bought my first new International on rubber. Garry, our son, is still using that tractor.

THRESHING CREW

Wilbor Stirling had the first threshing machine in our area. I finally bought one of my own. We usually had 6 teams hauling bundles, a field pitcher and a spike pitcher. I started cutting the grain with 4 horses on a binder. After I bought a tractor I put it on the binder. Anne ran the binder and I was on the tractor. Later I bought a power binder. Anne was unable to run the power binder so I went on it and she was on the tractor. We cut our crop for quite a few years that way. The first few years when Allan Graham and W. Stirling did our threshing, there were a lot of men to cook for - about 20 of them. If it rained, most of them went home, as they were mostly neighbors. At nights they slept in the barn or under the wagons. Then they got a bunk house to sleep in, — out of the fresh air and lots of hot air inside.

I bought a pull type swather and a combine. It was hard to change over, but it was almost impossible to hire help for threshing and stooking as everyone had gone to combining. We missed the good old days, but they were hard years too.

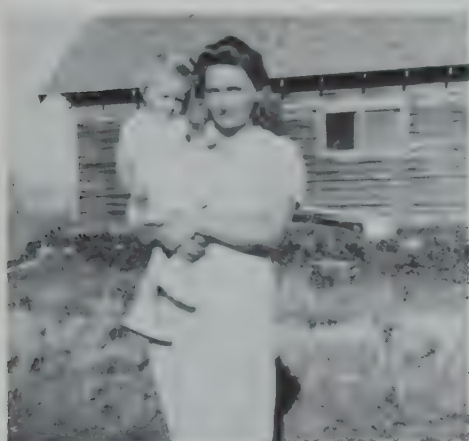
We always had cattle and hogs. If it was a poor year or hail or snow, and we were unable to get the crop off, the cows or hogs paid the bills and kept us going for another year.

JACK MERLE

Jack Merle had squatter's rights down in the Smokey flat and lived there a number of years. He raised his family there. He even had a hand-fed threshing machine which was destroyed by fire. After he left, which was in about 1948, Otto Nolde leased Merle's flat for a few years and ran his cattle there along with Ernest Prosser. Later the forestry took over and I ran my cattle there on a head tax for 7 years. Then we formed an association, which is called East Peoria-Smokey Grazing Association. In 1961 the members were Harold Dick, Dennis Rycroft, Garry Wendland, Dennis Siemens and George Wen-

land. It graduated to 11 members at one time but is down to 8 members at the present time. The depressing prices have been hard on the farmers or ranchers, as some like to be called. We have 9000 acres leased at present. We started out with 6000.

In June, 1972, there was a bad flood of the Smoky River and a lot of damage was done. We lost some cattle



Ann holding Diane.

and a truck which belonged to Garry. Garry's wife Barbara and 3 sons, Emanuel Littman and wife Frances and son Cameron and daughter Brenda, went down to check on the cattle knowing the flood was on. Before they knew it they were surrounded by water. The truck flooded out in the water and they had to run for it! Had to walk 10 miles to Henry Banman's who took them home. That year was the biggest flood in recorded history. All that was showing of the truck was the roof, and they were still 1 mile from the river. There are no buildings left or anything else on Merle's flat. Everything was either picked up for museums, or destroyed in the flood.



The George Wendland Clan on George and Anne's 40th Wedding Anniversary. Diane, Gary, Anne, George and Marilyn at back. Frances and Betty.

ANNE WENDLAND

I came into this world in 1920 in Laird, Saskatchewan, a little country town east of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. I



Gary Wendland on Harrow Cart.

was the first born of Mary and Frank Siemens, who were married in 1919. I was the eldest of 8, and Mom was Mary Unger, daughter of Jake Unger of Laird who was a farmer. She was from a family of 13.

WHAT A SPANKING

I have a few memories of our farm at Laird. Dad had the milk cow in Grandpa's pasture, and Mom went over across the road from our home to milk the cow every day. I remember one day Stella, my sister, and I went with Mom. Grandpa had a stock water tank by the pasture. Mom said, "Don't play in the water!" but naturally we did, splashing long weeds in it. Stella fell in on her back. I grabbed her by the hair and lifted her face above water and yelled. Boy, did we get spanked and then Grandma came to the rescue with a blanket and dried us out.

I had my first year of school at Laird. I couldn't speak a word of English when I started, but I learned from my teacher who was German also. We came to Alberta in November, 1928, and our first stop was Sexsmith, Alberta, as we were moving to Buffalo Lakes. Dad and my uncle Frank Unger, who was my mother's brother, were up earlier and found a farm house to move to. We came up by train. My uncle and aunt had 8 children, with 4 of us, so 12 in all. Our first night in Sexsmith was spent in the curling rink, in the waiting room. We had never seen a rink so played on the ice with the curling rocks most of the night. We stayed on the farm at Buffalo Lakes one year, then moved to Grande Prairie where I lived 'till my marriage in 1937 to George.

2 WEEKS COURTSHIP

I was working for Mrs. Clive Ireland at the cafe and came out to Peoria to visit a great aunt of mine and met George. I went back to work and George came right behind me. We were married a week later, a courtship of 2 weeks. We were married the 4th of January, 1937, - 40° below. Boy, was it cold, but we never noticed. We came out to Wanham and John, George's brother, met us at the train and took us to their place for the night. The next evening George took me to the homestead. The next morning - boy, I was in the bush! I had no idea how we got there. It was all bush and just a trail, canyons and bush. How it's changed now!



Five Generations: Baby, Patty Ryan; mother, Cheryl Ryan; grandmother, Betty Vig; great-grandmother, Anne Wendland and great-great-grandmother, Mrs. Mary Siemens, now living in B.C.

THE JOHN WENDLAND FAMILY

by Donna Wendland Reiswig

John Herman and Elvira Threasa (better known as Vera) Wendland were born to Charles and Frieda Wendland of Hinkley, Minnesota, and Edward and Hansiene Sather of Kristiansund, Norway.

Dad's first seven years were spent there, then he moved to Oregon, worked in a sawmill there and then on to Bow Island. Here he rented land and worked in a coal mine. The next move was to Blackfalds and in the spring of 1929 he moved to the Wanham area better known as Peoria. This is where he filed for his first homestead.

Mom, after spending two years in Markola, Oregon, moved with her parents to Burdette, Alberta, in June, 1917; then to Bow Island, and on to Blackfalds, Alberta, in October, 1920. Their family moved to the Wanham area in January, 1927. The Sather men filed on their homesteads.

PIONEER WANHAM

There lay the glade and neighboring stream
And through the dark green wood
The bright sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.

Sweet views, such as this country has
Can never well be forgotten
Were imaged by the pioneer's spirit
Not to be undaunted.

Dad and George Wendland put up a small shack on the S.E. 6-77-2-W6th. This remained Dad's farm for his farming years.

Dad and Mom met in 1930, were engaged in 1931, and were married on December 26, 1932. It was a double wedding with Uncle Edwin and Aunt Grace Sather. The wedding took place at Edward Sather's (now Wayne

Sather's place). It was an afternoon wedding and a good supper was prepared for family and close friends. Elder Rick performed the marriage vows.

Five children were born: *Lloyd Truman*, who married Patricia Moen of Bad Heart. Their children are Darryl, Bradley, and Tracy. *Elaine Kay* married Kelly Berg of Peoria. Their children are David, Wade, and Byrne. *Doreen Audrey* married Steve K. Yamamoto of Glendale, California. Their children are Steven, Kevin, and Christopher. *Donna May* married Reginald Reiswig of Peoria. Their children are Drena, Brian, and Treasa. *Linda Gail*, who married Douglas Schuler of Nipawan, Saskatchewan. Their children are Michael, Jason, Karrie, and Karissa (twins).

The old saying goes, 'If you want good health, choose your grandparents'. A little hard to do - I guess! Our family has had minor mishaps, but mostly we have been blessed with good health.

Having babies was a traumatic time for many families, especially when they had to travel over rough or muddy roads with poor transportation with medical facilities many hours away.

In 1935, when Elaine was born, it proved to be just that way. Sveda Borseth owned a Ford car and picked up Mother. The road was rutty with mud holes - a painful ordeal for a young mother who was about to deliver. It was voting day, and Dr. Johnstone, who lived on the 'Nurses Hill', was on her way home when she met the Borseth's car. They quickly drove downtown to Ida and Ray Tansem's house and cafe. Mother was put to bed and within minutes a baby girl was born. They wrapped Elaine up and put her on their wood box in the kitchen, while they took care of Mother.

STUCK IN THE RIVER

There was the time when Harold, Uncle Edwin, Uncle Martin, and Dad went hunting across the Smoky River. They rowed across in a boat that belonged to Charlie Gumerson. On the way back, the boat got jammed in the ice and they couldn't get out. They were ready to jump, but decided if all four got down and pushed on the ice it might move. The water was leaking in the boat. They thought they would drown. With much difficulty they made it to shore.

Ever since Lloyd was a young lad he loved horses. This particular time he got off his horse and hit it on the rump with the bridle. The horse kicked him in the head and he was knocked out. After mother bathed his face, he responded and was alright.

There was another time when Elaine and Lloyd fell off a horse when the horse became frightened by a car. This time, Lloyd had stitches in his tongue.

BOTTOMS UP

Early mornings in the farm house proved to be cool and dark. The popular place to get dressed was near the kitchen where the lamp was or close to the heater. Linda distinctly remembers one particular morning when she

was getting dressed close to the airtight heater. She bent over to pick up her panties and burnt a spot the size of an egg on her bottom. 'Twas very sore, for some time, and 'bottoms up' for her.

School and home bathroom facilities were quite different than what we're used to now. Doreen says she often thinks about the times when you used the outdoor biffys. In winter there were snow drifts to walk through to get there and when you sat down the frost melted and got you all wet. It was a rush to get back to the house. But in summer you stayed longer and looked the catalogues through, or read the newspaper.

It was threshing time and the teams of horses were coming with loads of bundles and then putting them through the threshing machine and going to the fields to pick up more. I remember standing near the front of the team. Something frightened them and they took off full speed. I fell on the ground and could see these big feet stampeding over me. I was fortunate that both horses and wagon completely missed me. I wasn't hurt at all.

We always enjoyed our family get-togethers. Birthdays were a special time and always remembered - usually with cake and ice cream and a gift. Christmas and New Years were get-togethers with Aunts, Uncles and Cousins. There was lots of preparation of a delicious turkey dinner and all the trimmings and the traditional pumpkin or mince meat pie. The wild spruce tree was selected from the forest and decorated for the occasion, and a gift for each member of the family was placed under it.

It was in 1968 that Mother and Dad retired from the farm. The farm was sold to I. Reiswig and Sons Ltd. They moved to Rutland, B.C. and are still living there.

LLOYD WENDLAND - HORSE LOVER

written by Pat Wendland

Lloyd's life has been centered around horses. At the early age of nine he walked behind the harrows driving his dad's work horses, one of which he also rode or drove to school. He also accompanied his dad in getting logs and made numerous trips driving a team to Wanham to deliver firewood, cream, and sometimes butter.

When Lloyd was sixteen, he purchased a black Percheron - thoroughbred cross horse. 'Chub' became his trick horse. He performed such stunts as kissing, sitting up, playing dead, counting his age, and standing on a block with all four feet. He was a top-notch saddle horse and Lloyd also used him in competition at Teepee Creek Stampede in such events as stakes races, walk, trot and run and stock horse races.

CATCHING WILD HORSES

Chub was Lloyd's key horse when he and his buddies, Del Bozarth, Allie Noren and Ernie Prosser decided to undertake catching wild horses in the Smoky River area, beyond Merle's Flats. This band of horses grew from some stock left behind by homesteaders. Their equipment and grubstake was carried in a wagon box pulled by a team. One or two tough saddle horses were needed by

each man. When they reached their destination, camp was set up in the wagon box, covered with a tarp. One night the temperature dipped to -40 degrees, so most of the night was spent shoving wood into the air-tight heater set up in the corner of the wagon box. In the morning they saddled up and hunted for fresh horse tracks. At the sight of a horse, excitement loomed within both saddlehorse and rider; lariats sang in the brisk cold air as they ran down and roped the thin, wild horses in the deep snow. The wild horse was then brought back to camp and confined in a make-shift corral. After a few days they toured back home, each taking their own catch. On one of these episodes Lloyd caught a young colt which he raised on a bottle. 'Babe' was a tough little saddle mare for many years. The boys broke some of the other horses, but some remained spooky outlaws and were sold as bucking horses.

In 1957, Lloyd teamed up with Del Bozarth and hooked up a chuckwagon outfit which they drove across country, to the Teepee Creek Stampede. They did this for three years. Then each booked their own outfit of thoroughbred horses. Lloyd ran chuckwagon and chariot outfits until 1971. Since then he has run some flat horses.

After renting land from Frodie Neilson, Alfred Amundson, and Erling Borseth for a number of years, Lloyd obtained his homestead in 1959. This is where he built his present farm. On Dec. 27, 1960, Lloyd married Pat Moen. They have three children, Daryll born in 1964, Bradley in 1966 and daughter Tracy in 1971. They each have a significant input in their mixed farm. Now when you enter Lloyd's driveway, you can't help but notice the Thoroughbred mares and frolicking foals on one side of the fence, and his handsome Belgian geldings on the other.



Victor Wiegel and parents.



WIEGEL, BARRY

I really enjoyed the years I spent on the farm in Wanham.

I finished grade eight and continued on to grade nine in Grande Prairie, and furthered my education in Edmonton at M.E. Lezerth High School. I now have a degree in veterinary work, am also a chef, and have a degree in secretarial skills.

I am now living in Clairmont in a trailer, and am working in The Grande Prairie Pet Shop.

I really enjoyed living on the farm as we had some wonderful neighbors such as the Bennetts, S. Hansens, Tansems, Sallises, and Grandma and Grandpa Wiegel, who are doing wonderful in Rutland, B.C.



Mrs. Boisvert, Noel Boisvert, Mrs. Wiegel and Dave, Mrs. C. Olson.

THE ROBERT WILDE STORY

by Vi. Wilde

We moved from Eaglesham to Wanham on a cold, miserable day in January, 1957.

Robert was in business there in partnership with his brother Arnold in the Massey Ferguson dealership and B.A. Oil.

The Massey Ferguson Co. had persuaded us to come to Wanham and re-establish a dealership at this point.

It was not easy for us to leave Eaglesham as we had many friends there but it was a chance we could hardly turn down.

Our first home was a house we rented from Mrs. Hauser located about where the C.O.C.O. Hall stands today. Next door to us was the post office and home of Mr. and Mrs. John Hall. John and Nan were good neighbors.

WHAT NEXT?

Our first night in Wanham was spent with George and Emma Moojelski, friends from Eaglesham. Shortly after supper we heard the fire siren. The fire was up at the school and the home of one of the teachers, Mrs. Jennings, was burned to the ground.

The next morning while I was busy trying to get settled in my new home, Robert came in tell me that there had



The Wildes. Left to Right: Arnold Wilde, Dorian Wilde, Vi Wilde and Robert Wilde.

been a bad accident in the district and a woman had died. I remember saying "lets go back to Eaglesham".

However, things seemed to improve after that and we stayed on.

Our first business was located in the old Massey Ferguson building which we bought from Octave Prevost.

Two years after we moved to Wanham, Robert bought out Elwin Howlett, the Imperial Oil dealer. We moved from the Hauser place to our new home where we still live.

For many years we had both the Massey Ferguson dealership and Imperial Oil. Finally though, Robert gave up the Massey Ferguson business. The difficulty in hiring good help was one of the reasons and the price of machinery and parts was another. Customers have the mistaken idea that a dealer sets his own prices and when you tell him how much an article is he might not call you a highway robber but the look he gives you plainly expresses his feelings.

We still have the Imperial business in partnership with Leon Gouchee.

Our only child, a daughter, Roberta is married to Marvin Johnston. She and Marvin have two children; Dwane, 16 and Wendy 14. They live in Grande Prairie where Marvin is a barber.

How much longer Robert will stay in business I do not know. But since he sold our first place of business to George McFadgen and bought the post office building from Wally Tansem, he seems reluctant to retire. Too comfortable in his surroundings I believe.

Wanham has been good to us and I imagine we will spend our last days here.

LAWRENCE AND MARY WILSON

Corinne Wilson

(My mother-in-law, Mary Wilson will celebrate her

81st birthday on March 2, 1980. She is enjoying reasonably good health and still resides in the West Vale area. The loss of her husband and her children were severe blows. Her husband, Lawrence, passed away in October, 1947; her daughter, Thelma, in July, 1978, and her son, David, in July, 1978.

David, prior to his death, persuaded her to write her history. Her story is a tribute to her husband and children).

I was born in Kladno, Bohemia, which is now Czechoslovakia, in 1899, the 2nd oldest of five children. I was ten years old when my parents left the Old Country to come to Canada. About 15 days later, we landed at the port in Halifax. Our destination was Frank, Alberta. We had family ties there as my uncles, Frank and Louis Poch, had preceded us to Canada and settled in that area. My father homesteaded at Frank until his death in 1945. My mother died shortly after our entry into Canada.

Circumstances forced me to go to work at the age of twelve. I held miscellaneous jobs which took me to such places as Lundbreck, Blairmore, Pincher Creek, and finally Winnipeg. The year was 1914, and for two years I went to school in Winnipeg at the insistence of my employer. The next job was at T. Eatons where I worked for 3 years. I met my husband, Lawrence Wilson, while living in Winnipeg. We were married on November 14, 1918. We were blessed with a daughter, Thelma, in April of 1920.

My husband was born at Bunclody, Manitoba in 1894, the third youngest of eight children. He grew up on their farm for sixteen years, at which time his folks sold their farm and moved to Brandon. He was a barber by trade, and as such, our chief source of income.

Winnipeg was our home for three years. After that, our gradual trek west began in the hopes of finding better opportunities. We lived in such places as Alsask and Evesham, both in Saskatchewan. While we were living in Evesham, my husband lost his right hand in a hunting accident. His decision to enter the insurance business as a salesman was born of necessity. The insurance company he represented sent him to the city of Saskatoon, and there we lived for two years. While my husband was travelling around selling insurance, he encountered a homesteader in Northern Saskatchewan. This fellow was minus a hand also. This incident was to change the course

of our lives. The fact that this fellow was able to homestead, despite his handicap, impressed my husband greatly. Being of farming origin, Lawrence longed to go farming. He said, "If this fellow can do it, I can too!"

Our decision to go homesteading was made, but where? My husband's choice was northern Saskatchewan, mine was the Peace River area.

My first glimpse of the Peace River country was in 1925 when I came to attend my sister's funeral. Frances, my sister lived with the Nobel Johnstons for many years prior to her death. I stayed on for about a month after the funeral. I liked the country very much. Through this association, we decided on the Peace River country. Positive action towards our goal was taken when we left Saskatoon on December 1, 1928, armed with a large dose of optimism. The few belongings we kept - stove, table, chairs, linen, etc. were shipped ahead by rail. We had our share of mishaps enroute - bad roads, crossing thin ice, at one point our car completely overturned. A part of our savings was spent fixing the car in Edmonton. At that time there was no direct route to Wanham from the direction of McLennan, High Prairie and Slave Lake, etc. We had to go to Peace River, then swing south by way of Dunvegan Crossing, Spirit River and Rycroft. Finally on December 8, 1928, at 2:00 a.m., we reached the end of our journey. We arrived with a shovel, an axe, our clothing and enough money to file on a homestead. We spent the winter with the Johnstons. My husband



Mary Wilson's 79th Birthday Party. Left to Right: Eileen Parlee, Mary Sather, Bertha Olsen, Lena Ewanchuk, Mary Wilson, Jennie Stannich, Ruby Reum and Corrine Wilson.



David Wilson, 3 years old, in front of his folk's first home.

filed on N.E. 30-76-4-W6 in February of 1929. Our next goal was a home of our own. We proceeded to realize that dream by hauling logs and cull lumber. Our efforts paid off when we moved into our house in April of 1929. It mattered little that the roof was of tar paper and there were no windows. At last we had a home! Two or three days later, a freak fire broke out on our quarter. We fought desperately to save our house and succeeded.

Looking back now, I often wonder how we survived in the first few years of homesteading. Times were tough

and there was little money for food and clothing. That winter, (1929) we had \$40.00 left. With this money we purchased groceries from T. Eaton by mail order. We boarded the school teacher for a couple of years, which assured us of \$30.00 a month. Our efforts to grow a garden were futile those first two years. Our garden would freeze in the middle of June and July. My husband worked for John Deere as a collector, to bring in some income. There was a time when he sharpened scissors for 25¢. The women-folk canned everything they could. I remember different excursions to the bush to pick berries which were promptly canned upon arrival at home. I was given a hen with 13 chicks, and a calf. With this start, we gradually increased our livestock to the point of self-sufficiency.

But life was not all hardship. Our school, built in 1930, was the centre of such events as dances, school concerts and drama group plays. The women brought refreshments and coffee. Babysitters were hard to get, so the children mingled with the adults. Laughter rang and conversation flowed in such rare moments of leisure.

The years passed in a repetitive cycle of clearing, piling, and breaking from morning till night. The clearing, piling of brush and roots was done by hand; the breaking by horses or tractor. Since we had neither, we traded our car to a neighbor who had horses, in exchange for breaking. Later we hired neighbors who had tractors to do our breaking. By 1930, we had ten acres cleared. By 1938, seventy acres, and so on. We set a goal of ten acres a year, but many times we failed to reach that goal. We had no horses and no machinery, so for a time we rented to Bill Metheny until his death in 1937. We acquired our first team of horses, a disc and a seed drill that year. Whatever crop we harvested was kept for feed for the cows. If frost didn't damage the crops, drought did. Such was the case in 1938, when we lost our crop because of drought. The most significant event of the year 1939, was the birth of our son, David.

1947 was the first time we had the full quarter in production. This represented the climax to our lives, the years of work and the dreams we shared. Our joy and pride was short-lived, as tragedy struck. That October, my husband passed away.

I carried on farming in spite of our loss. I bought the quarter we are presently living on, shortly after my husband passed away. I retired from farming in 1960, and turned the farm over to my son.

Through our trials and errors of those homesteading years, the singular factor that spurred us on was the dreams we shared. Dreams spurred us on to greater efforts, and dreams softened the blows of disappointments.

ARRIVAL OF DAVID WILSON

as told to Eileen Parlee by Mrs. Mary Wilson

On March 17, 1939, early in the morning, Tom and Buck Parlee looked out over the snow-clad world bathed in beautiful Peace River sunshine, and remarked, "There go the Wilsons to Woking."

Interest in the activities of Mary and Lawrence Wilson was a genuine homesteader's concern. You see, they were expecting a baby! Their only child, nineteen year old Thelma, had been left home to do the chores.

The travellers creaked along in their horse-drawn caboose. Needless to say, they had been planning this trip for some time. Lawrence had inquired earlier in Wanham about the time the freight train, with passenger car attached, would pass through Woking. In error, they had given him Wanham time instead of the Woking departure time. Tediously they travelled the 13 1/2 mile trip, only to learn that the train had gone on to Grande Prairie. Now, what were they to do! Upon inquiring at several Woking home doors they were informed that everyone was afraid to keep the very pregnant woman over night. Circumstances then forced them to start back home again for the night, with a very tired lady and a tired team.

As they rode along, they decided to turn off the Woking road to the right, to the Jim Beange home. This decision shortened their journey about five miles. Being a typical homesteader's wife, Mrs. Beange welcomed them with open arms. Her words of greeting were so kind as she said, "Stay here for the night and Jim will drive you out to Woking in the morning." Team and passengers were so tired, and after a nice warm supper, were soon tucked into bed.

Four a.m. came early as they had to be on their way. This time they caught the train, which incidently, was the last freight train that ever hauled a passenger car. Needless to say, the prospective parents were relieved to be on their way to Grande Prairie.

Before so very long, the train stopped at the station - so much of the journey completed. Their next stop was to rent a room in the Murray Hotel. Dr. Carlisle's office was just across the street, so with a sigh of relief, they tried the office door. Their hopes fell as they found it locked. Now what? Just then the man who was hired to build up the coal furnace each night came along. He unlocked the door, invited them in, then called Dr. Carlisle at his home. His instructions were, "Tell them to go to their hotel room and I will soon see Mrs. Wilson there."

He was as good as his word, as they soon heard his knock on the door.

Since this was Mrs. Wilson's first examination by a doctor during her pregnancy, she was rather surprised when he said, "I'll fix you a castor oil cocktail and we'll have you in the hospital tomorrow!" - and away he went.

Mrs. Wilson's sleep was soon broken by labour pains. Without further discussion or hesitation, Lawrence immediately phoned the doctor. In those days the doctor's duties included driving the patient to the hospital.

Before midnight, on March 18th, the baby weighed in at three pounds.

In those days the C.F.G.P. radio station allowed people to talk to their families at home. Lawrence was so pleased to report to Thelma the next afternoon:

"Your mother is fine, and you have a little baby brother, David!"

About two weeks later, mother and baby were safely back home again.

TEACHING IN WANHAM (1939 - 1941)

as recalled by 'Miss Wishart'

Early in the morning of Sunday, September 3, 1939, a freight train deposited me on the station platform at Wanham. I walked into town and presented myself at the house of the Chairman of the School Board, Ed Harrington. In the Harrington home everyone, including the neighbors, was listening with intent concentration to the radio. The announcer's words were unbelievably shocking, "Britain has declared war on Germany". World War II began on my first day in Wanham.

Arrangements had been made for me to board with Mrs. Octavia Prevost, a dear little French lady who lived in a big, old, two-storey house on the west side of main street across from the hotel. The elementary teacher, Miss Horn, also boarded with Ma Mere. The school principal, Stewart Jones and his family lived in a little house directly behind us. The school was located south of the village up over the hill about a mile and a half. For the next two years rain or shine, dust, snow or slush, I scurried up over that hill to South Slope school every morning and trudged slowly back down the hill late afternoon.

The two-roomed elementary school, an attractive building with a cement foundation, sat squarely by the crossroads. Beyond and farther back from the road, stood an older one-room school, the High School. Behind the elementary school lived the school janitors, Mr. and Mrs. Sawers, whom I especially appreciated, for they kept the school warm, clean and orderly. At my previous one-room rural school, Hermit Lake, the teacher and pupils did the janitor work and chores every day.



Grace Wishart met with a group of youngsters for stories and songs on the way home from school. "Do You Know The Muffin Man?" was a favorite.

The primary class, grades one to three, consisted of about thirty pupils and, as Wanham had a number of new settlers from European countries, there were about four or five children from each of seven or eight nationalities in the class. Some of the grade one beginners couldn't speak English.

Forty years ago teachers enjoyed a much more

favourable position in the community than they do today. Teachers were respected as educators and leaders in the community. They usually had the complete co-operation of parents, children and the public alike, and reasonable administration and authority within the school was unquestioned. The following incident is an example.

GARLIC

Some of my pupils reeked so of garlic that I could hardly make myself get near them. I had to do something, so I sent a letter home with each child. It requested that children not eat garlic for breakfast or lunch and warned that if they did they would be sent home. A couple of children were sent home and, after



Dancers from Wanham Primary School competing in the Spirit River Musical Festival.

that, no more garlic problems and no indication that anyone had taken offense. School authority is not so easy now.

On the other hand, the community expected the teacher to look after all aspects of the pupil's well being, as well as teaching academic learning. Many families lived in old log or frame houses, and head lice and bed bugs were quite common in the school. The teacher was expected to check the children every month or so, and advise the parents what to do. The District Health Nurse in Wanham gave the teachers encouraging advice and co-operation and looked after the children referred to her with efficient skill; but the teachers were generally expected to diagnose contagious diseases, ringworm, impetigo, and other children's health problems such as poor vision, hearing and weight. And we did.

These were the last years of the 'Hungry 30's'. The Alberta Department of Education was beginning to convert the system of administration of rural school districts by Local School Boards (commendably conscientious men, but they just could not get together enough tax money to pay the teachers regularly each month). Most teachers understood the problems, took pride in their own work and did the best job of teaching that they could, without relating their chosen work to the money they expected they would eventually receive.

In Wanham at Christmas, the annual School Christmas Concert was held downtown in the Community Hall. After Santa had given the children their treats, the three teachers were called forward and each received their Christmas surprise, a cheque toward three month's back pay. Everyone was so excited, we really felt that Santa, red suit and all, had actually given us this Christmas gift.

Teachers used to move around much more than they do now. Most teachers stayed only two or three years at any one school. Then, of course, salaries were very low everywhere, there were very few men teachers, none in elementary classrooms, and married women were not allowed to teach. Salaries were positional, the average public school teacher was paid about \$750 a year and High School teachers about \$300 more a year. The single salary schedule, based on qualifications and experience, was not introduced till many years later. A few girls tried to keep their marriage secret so they could continue teaching. I remember one such teacher who taught at Wanham for a short while, but I remember her for quite a different reason.

Wanham School was entered in the Spirit River Musical Festival in Choral Speaking and Folk Dancing. The children had been at a disadvantage having to dance to records. This particular teacher went to Edmonton on her holidays and, while there, bought a piano and had it shipped to Wanham School. She couldn't play a note and was not interested in learning. But thanks to her, at the next Festival, Wanham added choruses, solos and piano accompaniment for dancing. When the teacher left, the Board bought the piano for the school.

Kindergartens or playschools were unheard of, but a little group of pre-school children would often stop me along the street on my way home from school, and I would teach them songs and games on the porch in the front of the Hall. To this day I have not lived down one falsetto rendition of 'Do You Know The Muffin Man?'

Come spring though, the children who would begin school in September were invited, usually on Friday afternoons, to visit the primary classroom and find out for themselves what school was all about.

Wanham School was in the Spirit River Inspectorate and our A.T.A. was the Spirit River Local. Once a month Spirit River, Rycroft, or Wanham took turns hosting the A.T.A. meetings on a Saturday afternoon, and every teacher in the district looked forward to going to this monthly social event.

The second year at Wanham, Mrs. Prevost was not able to board the teachers but she let me room with her and I had my meals at Jacobsen's cafe close by. The Jacobsens made me most welcome and included me in their family group. In the spring, Norma Dever, (now Mrs. Jack Campbell of Port Coquitlam - a Wanham romance) the elementary teacher, and I rented a little house back in the trees behind Sandercock's store from Rose Tansem and we batched there. Bridge became one of our favorite pastimes, or teasing Mr. C.C. Evoy, the school principal who had taken Stewart Jones' place in the High School.

The village of Wanham was quite isolated from the rest of the Peace River country in those days. There was the train, but it went through at awkward hours. None of the teachers owned a car. People who did have cars didn't use them for just driving around town. There were no such thing as buses, and no school buses either. Children who lived within two or three miles of the school usually walked to and from school. Parents drove the children



Grace Wishart and Gay Prevost.

who lived too far to walk.

A dirt road went through Wanham from Rycroft to Watino. The Burnt River hill was bad; impassible when it rained. Then, people who had to get to Grande Prairie or Spirit River would try the Bad Heart road, south then west to the Grande Prairie highway.

BREAKFAST ON THE CABOOSE

Friday after school I might be lucky enough to catch a ride home to Grande Prairie, with a traveller or motorist going there. Then on Sunday afternoon I could catch the freight train, ride in the caboose from Grande Prairie to Rycroft, and stay overnight in the hotel there. Then, very early next morning, continue on the same freight train to Wanham, breakfasting enroute with the train crew before hurrying from the station up over the hill to school. Sometimes, but not too often, I arrived a few minutes late.

Wanham, as I knew it, was like a little colony of fifty or sixty people. Every one knew everyone else's business and the village overflowed with friendliness and good fellowship. There was the open air skating rink behind the lumber yard, and before it was flooded everyone skated on Leriger's dam or out at MacDonald's farm. Mrs. MacDonald's cocoa and cookies were a special after-skating treat. Ernie Trump organized skiing on the hills south of the village. The men had an active, if not too professional, hockey team. The women had their Bunko Club (a game similar to Yatze). We played Bunko every second week, and each hostess tried to make her lunch the highlight of the evening. Once a week, rural and town folk gathered at the Hall and projectionist Ed Prevost, the local Massey-Harris agent, provided a show. Sundays there was badminton in the Hall, with many ardent players and as many visiting spectators.

Halloween was enjoyed by adults and children alike. There was a big Halloween Masquerade in the Hall. Then on Halloween after the school parties, ghosts and goblins, some nearly six feet tall, roamed the streets.

The Klondike Carnival filled one weekend with fun, dress up and games of chance that created one night inflationary millionaires.

Wanham had two churches, the Catholic Church whose priest came from another parish for Mass, and the

Presbyterian Church with a resident minister. I attended the Presbyterian Church and was C.G.I.T. leader for the nondenominational group of very happy, active girls. One of my C.G.I.T. girls invited me to her wedding. Two days later I was still dancing in their living room. My first Ukrainian wedding!



Wanham Hockey Team, 1939. Back Row, Left to Right: Merv Hill, Stuart Jones, Ross Archibald, Wally Tansem and Julien St. Pierre, Bill Laughy. Front Row: Jack Campbell, Ed Prevost, Elmer Hill.

DROP THE TROUSERS

The R.C.M.P. detachment from Spirit River policed Wanham, and between the Jehovah Witness distributing their tracts by night (which was then illegal) and the local bootleggers selling home brew (also illegal) they were kept busy. One young officer whom I knew told of driving to Wanham and passing a well-known bootlegger. He turned around and gave a chase. The bootlegger grabbed his brew, ran into the bush and broke the bottles against a tree. The liquid splashed all over the man's pants. The police officer, not to be foiled, made the culprit take off the trousers, wrapped them in paper and took them as evidence. At the trial the bootlegger was acquitted because there was no established proof as to what caused the trousers to be wet. The opportune young officer was disconsolate.

Now, many years, many schools, and many home towns later, I think back to Wanham and am grateful that I had the opportunity to live there when it was young and vibrant. Those who live there today can be justly



Ready for the Hallowe'en Masquerade. Eileen McLean, Gay Prevost, Ray Tansem and Grace Wishart.

proud that through the years Wanham has continued to grow and expand in the changing times, with the same spirit of community involvement and good fellowship.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Name: Mrs. Grace Stewart (nee Miss Grace Wishart) better known as 'Miss Wishart'.

Born: Grande Prairie, Alberta, October 4, 1915 - in the old log Katharine Pritty Mission Hospital.

Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Alex Wishart, early pioneers of Grande Prairie who came over the Edson Trail, 1913, with daughter Jessie, who is now Mrs. Jessie Elliott, Matricia Towers, Grande Prairie, Alberta.

Education: Grades 1 - 12, Grande Prairie Public and Grande Prairie High School; Edmonton Normal School (1935-36) and University of Alberta, Edmonton; B.Ed., University of B.C., Vancouver 1964.

Teaching: 41 years of teaching in Alberta, British Columbia, Canadian Forces Germany - 2 years.

In Wanham: Taught primary grades 1, 2 and 3, from September, 1939, to June, 1941 - 2 years.

Retired: June, 1977. Last school taught in - Sexsmith Public School, grade 1.

Present Address: Mrs. Grace Stewart, 1428 - Lady Simcoe Apt., 440 - Simcoe Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1L3.

Married: Married 1963, Mr. Russell Stewart (widower), Grande Prairie. Divorced 1972. No children.

HISTORY OF HELEN AND BILL WOIENSKI

submitted by Emily Sanoski

They arrived in April, 1932. They left Poland because of the wars. Conditions there were quite poor. Frank Jakubowski had come to the area one year before, (they were friends in the old country) so they decided to try their luck in a new country, never realizing what rough times lay ahead of them.

They travelled to Quebec City by boat, then came to the Wanham area by train. The night they arrived they made a bed of spruce boughs. Later on, Walter Stepaniuk gave them an old shack to live in. There were snakes living in it! Bill Woienski got a homestead about four miles west of Wanham. Both he and his wife, Helena, cut logs by hand, carried them and built a one room log house. For food, they ground wheat, cooked and ate it, used it for bread, roasted it, and used it for coffee, too. Later on, perhaps a rabbit or two supplemented the diet.

Bill went to work in the summers, stooking, working on threshing crews, cutting trees or root picking. Mrs. Woienski stayed alone while her husband went to work. It was one and a half miles to the closest neighbor. She found it very lonely and for the first year she cried a lot. The bears would stand and look in the window, and she was very afraid, as she had never seen bears before. In the winters, Bill would kill squirrels, then walk to Spirit River to sell them.

There was no path or road to Wanham, and water up to the knees for half a mile, all summer long. Bill packed groceries on his back, usually walking down the railroad track. He couldn't afford to buy a horse. Once, packing a 100 lb. bag of flour, it broke and half of it was lost on the railroad track. In those days, that was quite a loss.

In 1932, Maria, their daughter, was born. Helena made baby clothes out of her own dresses she brought from Poland. Once the baby was very sick with a high fever, so Bill carried her to Wanham to the nurse, who gave her proper medication.

Both Bill and Helena picked roots for Joe Meyer for fifty cents a day. Bill also cut brush for him.

Mr. Stepaniuk plowed up a patch of land for Bill by the log house, to be used as a garden. He used horses to do this. Bill paid for this work by working for Walter Stepaniuk. Later on there was a bush fire, and as Helena was home alone, she took all their belongings out of the cabin. All the brush burned around the cabin, but the plowing that was done saved the cabin from burning up. She was very scared. There was no where to go.

Bill worked for a farmer at Sexsmith. He had no money to pay for wages, so he gave Bill a cow instead. Bill led her on a rope and walked all the way from Sexsmith. The cow was very good; she stayed close to home even though there was no fence. When she had a calf, she would chase the bears away.

The mosquitoes were very bad; they had to make a smudge in a bucket in the house. To kill flies, Helena picked poisonous mushrooms and sprinkled them with sugar and milk. She had the misfortune of throwing an old one out, and the dog ate it and died shortly.

Bill got a job cutting brush on a cutline. The R.C.M.P. came along and said immigrants weren't allowed to work, jobs were for Canadians first and they took away their passports. These were later returned.

For entertainment, there wasn't much, as the neighbors lived quite far away. They did manage to walk to church services once in awhile.

These are some of the memories of the six years they spent in the area.

In 1938, Bill and Helena filed on a homestead in Codesa, where they still live in good health. In 1942, another daughter, Emily was born to them. How happy they were! They felt the family was complete now.

Their life in Codesa was not easy, (homesteading never was) but times were much better for them. Soon their daughters grew up and married local men.

Maria married Gilbert Bice from Eaglesham. They have two children - Clara and Kevin, who are both married.

Emily married Pete Sanoski from Codesa, and they have one son, Garry, who is still in school.

WOZNIAK'S, ANTON

The Wozniak's arrived from Poland with four children on June 24th, 1930 - a one month trip by ship and train.

We lived with the Sanocki's on land they bought from Cameron, across from the present school. For ten dollars

we became homesteaders and moved into a makeshift shack that August. Beds were homemade of rough lumber and covered with dry hay. Dry, that is, unless it was raining. Then it was a matter of finding a place with no drip!

Drinking water was a problem. There was nothing to catch water in, and digging a well we found was no help.

A year later we broke one acre of land. Mr. Stepaniuk disced and seeded it in 1932. That year a plague of rabbits ate the oats and the garden.

Dad worked whenever he could, mostly for Mike Shannon clearing the land by hand. It was there he bought his first horse - a colt that grew up to be 'Charley', the best horse in the world, so we thought. When we left Wanham in 1936, we dismantled our first Canadian home and traded it to Mike Shannon for a harness.

Life north-west of Wanham became unbearable because of heavy bush, poor land and no roads. Presbyterian missionaries, Mrs. Ledingham and Miss Grigor brought us parcels of used clothing. But by 1936 Sonacki's, Woienski's, Pisarchuk's all left for better land and we went with them.

Both Louis Tansem and Olaf, his brother, sheltered us for a while on our move to Codesa. Several years later when some of us returned to Wanham to continue school we again stayed at 'Ole's'.

TO SCHOOL BY FREIGHT

Going to school in Wanham meant walking four miles to Codesa, catching a freight train when it slowed down, and then jumping off in Wanham. If it didn't stop, it meant looking for a soft landing at 30 - 40 miles per hour. The N.A.R. is lined in a few spots with my skin.

THE PITCH FORK

Threshing time was a busy time, with jobs for almost everyone. My dad recalls buying his first fork and heading for work south of Wanham on Munro's outfit. Our neighbor, Mike Ross, having been in Canada several years offered to go along as interpreter. As they approached the threshing machine, Ross kindly offered to carry the fork. Mr. Ross got the job, as he had a fork. Too late, did Dad realize that he had lost his interpreter, along with his fork. That six miles back to his starving family was his longest six miles ever!

But it was the horse, 'Charley' that changed our lives the most. He could bring a barrel of water on a sloop. He could haul rocks, skid logs, pull stumps and later, with his mate, "Prince," pull a wagon loaded with bundles, hay or firewood.

GOODBYE CHARLEY

Thus it was that when I left Codesa to go back to 'Ole's' and school, of course I went to say good-bye to Charley. I had my best clothes on, including my first pair ever of leather shoes. These shoes had a highly polished and hardened toe-cap.

Sure enough, as I talked to the horse, he nuzzled closer

and stepped on my foot. The harder I pushed, the harder he leaned on me - all 1800 lbs. of him! The pain was unbearable! My shiny toe-cap collapsed, my toe cracked and I screamed. The horse finally moved and I limped painfully away with a ruined shoe, a broken toe, and my eyes filled with tears. I never did finish saying good-bye to that clumsy horse!

Edward was born in Ole Tansem's house, Roman was born in the farm house in Codesa. Both were delivered by neighbors - who found this a good chance to visit and help. The rest of us children were kept away at the neighbors for a few hours. Even at ten years of age, some of us still believed in the stork. For me, I'm glad I never saw one, or he might have taken me back to his nest, and I'd still be waiting for my first pair of leather shoes!

WROLSON

Ole and Gena Wrolson and three children, Myrtle, Art and Gehard, arrived by train in Belloy from Scoby, Montana, in November, 1924. Chris Knudson (Gena's brother) met them at the train and took them to stay with Frank Carpenter, who was a bachelor at that time. They stayed there that winter and in the spring moved into Wanham, where Ole worked on the section and Gena ran a boarding house. They saved their money for a year, then took a homestead 5 miles west of Wanham, and built a one-room shack on it. Ole hauled ice from the Burnt River into town, cut wood and sold it, to get grocery money. He also did a lot of butchering and selling meat to people wanting fresh meat. In the spring and summer, they kept clearing land with an axe and pulling the stumps with a team of horses. It was a long hard task. They had a few pigs, cattle and horses. Gena always raised turkeys and sold them to the Royal Cafe in Grande Prairie.



The Ole Wrolson family on the farm west of Wanham in 1928. Myrtle, Mrs. Wrolson and Ole Wrolson.

TAKE HER BACK

In 1929 Doris was born at home. Mrs. Fred Murphy was the midwife.

In 1934, Evelyn was born with the district nurse, Miss Conroy, attending her birth - also at home. When Miss Conroy showed Doris the baby and asked her how she'd like to keep her, Doris' reply was, "Take her back where she came from, we sure don't want her!" In those days we believed in storks.

When Gehard was 13 years old, he fell from the hay loft of a barn and spent months flat on his back in a cast in the Grande Prairie Hospital. When they removed the cast they found he could not walk, so he spent several more months in bed at home. All this time was not totally lost as, to pass the time, he learned to play both violin and guitar.

In 1935, Ole was hurt in a threshing machine accident and due to poor, muddy roads he was so long enroute that having lost so much blood, he passed away the following day.

Gena, Art and Gehard did the farming. Myrtle worked in Grande Prairie.



George and Evelyn Cunningham on their wedding day.

The Royal Winner School was built and Doris started school.

In the spring of 1939, Gena got sick and went to the Grande Prairie Hospital where they found she had T.B. They let her come home to rest and get lots of fresh air and direct sunshine. She kept getting worse, so was sent out to Edmonton where she passed away in August, leaving 5 children.

By this time Myrtle was married, so she took Doris and Evelyn to live with her and her husband, in the Turner Valley Oilfield where her husband worked.

Art and Gehard stayed on the farm. They farmed and worked for neighbors until Art joined the army, and Gehard came to Turner Valley and worked in the oilfields. The farm was rented out and later sold. Art married Myrtle Rutherford of Prestville and had 6 children, now at Olds. Gehard married Jean Ronagan of the Turner Valley oilfields and had 1 daughter and they live in Bashaw. Art and Gehard have passed away. Myrtle Alexander of Camrose had 1 son. Doris Powell

has 3 sons. Evelyn Cunningham has 2 daughters. Evelyn (Mrs. George Cunningham) and Doris (Mrs. Duncan Powell) live on farms near Camrose.

THE ZMEAN STORY

by Adelaide Zmean

Howard Zmean spent his early years on a farm along Lesser Slave Lake. He spent one year at Beaton River driving a truck in the construction of the airport. Then he spent some time in the army before starting his own pulpwood business. It was this business that first brought him to Wanham where he hauled pulpwood from the area south of Wanham. It was while he was in Wanham that he met Adelaide O'Dwyer, a teacher, whom he later married. She had previously taught in the Bonnyville Division for four years. They spent their first married year in Ontario with Howard's parents but returned to Wanham the following year - Adelaide to teach and Howard to operate a trucking business. They lived in the original South Slope school which had been converted into a teacherage. Howard contracted to do all the road work around culverts and on the water breaks in the ditches along Highway 49. He then operated the Case Agency in Wanham for five years. During this time, he bought a farm east and south of Wanham. This was the beginning of his lifetime career in farming. Adelaide



The Zmean Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Howard and Adelaide. Front Row: Gwen, Marga, Pat, Joan.



The Zmeans - Howard, Joan, Patty and Adelaide.



Joan Zmean with Oscar Oakleaf in the background.

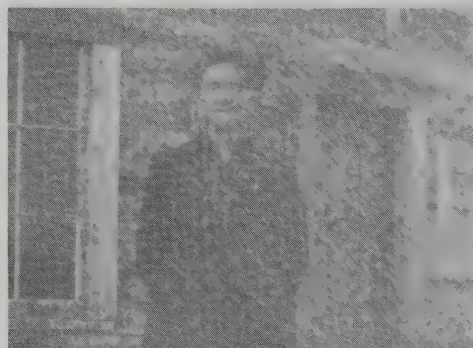
taught in the Wanham school for 28 years.

Howard and Adelaide had four daughters: Joan, who has her masters in biochemistry and a teaching certificate, married Garry Coy. They will make their home in Wanham. Patricia, who has a teaching degree with a music major, married Alvin Poll. They will also make their home in Wanham. Marga, who is a veterinary technician, is presently working at the store in Wanham. Gwen, who started a degree in physical education but has a strong desire to farm, is now helping Howard with his farming operation. She married Ken Drysdale from Claremont.

There are three Zmean grandchildren: Tegan, Gwen's daughter; Leslie, Marga's son and Shelagh, Joan's daughter.



Back Row, Left to Right: Dennis, Michael. Front Row: Edwin, Grace, Joan. (arm is Phyllis).



Mr. Andy Urness



The Justin Sinkevich Family at Lois Socha's Wedding. Left to Right: Walter, Bill, Pete, Walter Socha, Ernie Socha, Lois, Annie, Elsie, May and Emily. Front Row: Linda Urness (Dick) and Brian Sinkevich.



Grandma and Grandpa Sather in the early '60s.



Grace and Edwin Sather.



Back Row, Left to Right: Phyllis, Allison, Joan. Front Row: Grace and Lorraine.



The Edwin Sather Family. Back Row, Left to Right: Alan Scott, Henry Hessler, Dennis Sather, Joan Scott. Middle Row: Lorraine, Phyllis holding Calvin, Grace, Edwin holding Donna Scott. Front Row: Kenny, Sandra, Barbara, Alan Michael holding Debbie Scott.



The Sinkevich Family at Justin and Christina's 50th Wedding Anniversary.



The Urness Family. Left to Right: Johnny, Alice, Marvin, Berlin, Pearl, Clarence, Willard, Sanford, Mildred, Alvin and Melvin.



The A. Urness homestead house.



Back Row: Hilda Ouellette, Bert Ouellette, Caroline Urness. Front Row: Linda and Leslie Urness.



Dennis and Connie Wilford.



George and Eva Shea with baby Harold Howard.



Ella Thorin and Sam Kenny feeding a baby moose.



Chris Bair



Doug Campbell



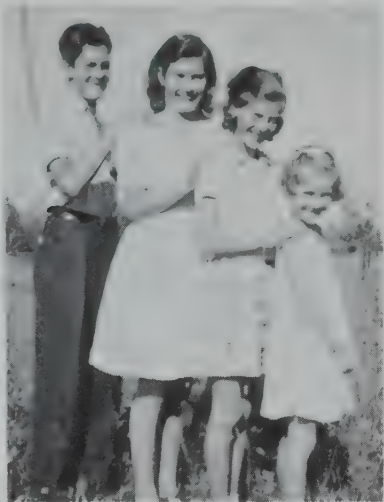
Stan and Janie (Boss) Stepaniuk.



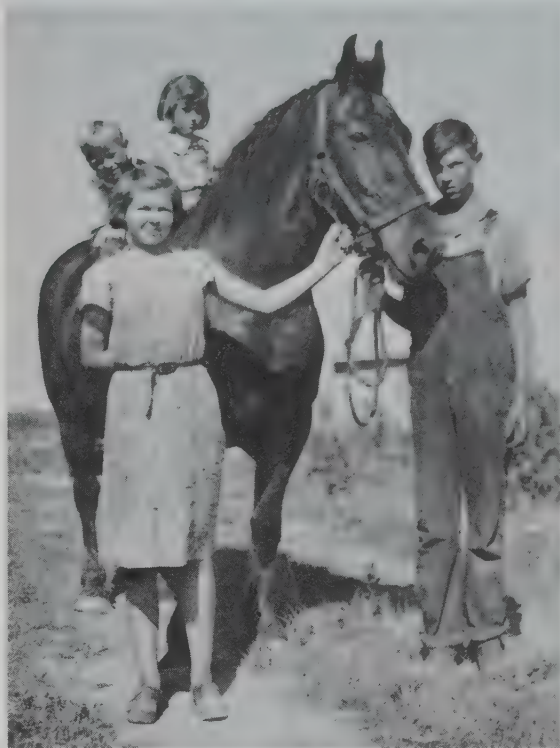
Sandy and Marilyn Stepaniuk.



Mary Zahara and Hazel Trump.



The Trump Children. Left to Right: Roy, Betty, Doreen and Shirley.



*Left to Right:
On horse -
Johnny and
Alice. On
Ground: Ca-
therine and
Milton.*



*Hubert Sorgen on
his 72nd birthday
with Debbie and
Sherol.*



The Keillers.

*The Sorgen Family. Back
Row, Left to Right:
Theresa, Amanda and
Clarence. Front Row:
Mrs. Sorgen with Orvis,
Hannah, Ralph, Carol
with Hubert's mother,
Vivian, Hubert and
Sanford.*





Alex Podruzny

Albertan finds home in Yakima baseball circuit

By Kevin Jones
Of The Campus Forum

This guy has it all.

That's the only way to sum up the talents of Yakima Valley College baseball star, Alex Podruzny.

What does young, 19-year-old Podruzny have? A throwing arm that has helped him receive offers for a pro contract with the Toronto Blue Jays and the St. Louis Cardinals. Now comes the surprise. He turned them down so he could continue his education. He does admit he feels an obligation to stay here because Y.V.C.C. has given him this chance to go to school, but he also feels that an education is important. He says that if you drop out of school to play ball and then "get hurt, you're finished. But, if you have an education to fall back on . . ."

Alex came to Yakima in the spring of 1979 from Alberta, Canada. It all began when assistant baseball coach Lane Phillips met Podruzny at a baseball camp and asked him to come down to Yakima to play some ball. He came down through a student exchange program and enrolled in Davis High School for the spring quarter of his senior year. That spring he played with the Pirates baseball team, helping them to place third at state. That summer he played American Legion ball with the Yakima Beetles and helped them take the National Title. He enrolled at Y.V.C.C. taking a full credit load while going for a major in engineering that fall. The following spring he played for the

Y.V.C.C. baseball team and led the Indians with a batting average of .389. Again he played with the Yakima Beetles, hitting .409 for the season. Right now he is once again playing for the Indians in right field and at third base.

Podruzny's future plans include getting his AA degree this spring and heading over to WSU to finish school.

From Canada Podruzny came to live with his "adopted" family, the Geffe's, who live in Wapato. His family in Canada was pleased that he came and was doing so well. "They're always supportive," says Podruzny. He also expresses deep appreciation to the Geffe's, and all of his coaches including Beetles' coach Bob Garretson, Y.V.C.C. coaches Bill Faller and Lane Phillips, and Davis coach Dale Ehler.

Podruzny thoroughly enjoys the Yakima Valley and its people. He says the people are "friendly, nice, and generous. They've been very good to me." However, things didn't start off rosy for Podruzny. He recalls his first day in Yakima when he was put into the batting cage to be fired upon by a pitching machine. A little overcome by Yakima's rather warm weather, he missed the first forty balls that came at him. He amusingly recalls the snickering and whispers of "Where did this joker come from!"

But Podruzny has adjusted and now even has a sister living nearby after she married a doctor she met while visiting to see one of his games.

"Yes," he laughs, "baseball works in mysterious ways!"



Muriel Nybakken with Don and Ralph on their farm 10 miles east of Wanham. Inset: Albert Nybakken.



Off to Provincials

August 1, 1979 Page 15

This group of confident-looking ball players will be carrying Peace Country colors into the Provincial Midget Baseball Playoffs in Taber this weekend. The Wanham Midget Astros captured the northern title with back to back wins against Edmonton's representatives a week ago. Team members are as follows: (front row, from left to right) Eddie Mazurkewich, Doug Zamora, Greg Dick and Kevin Potts. All of Wanham's second row, left to right: Dennis Sather, coach, and Craig Sather, both of Wanham. Evan Cheneck and Dennis Cheneck, both of Sevensmith, and Joe Lebeuf, manager, of Wanham. Back row, left to right: Bert Anderson of Eaglesham, Wade Brandlee of Grande Prairie, Robert Lee of Eaglesham and Jim Cheneck of Sevensmith. Missing from the photograph are Shawn Isaacson of Wanham and Kim Pearson of Eaglesham.



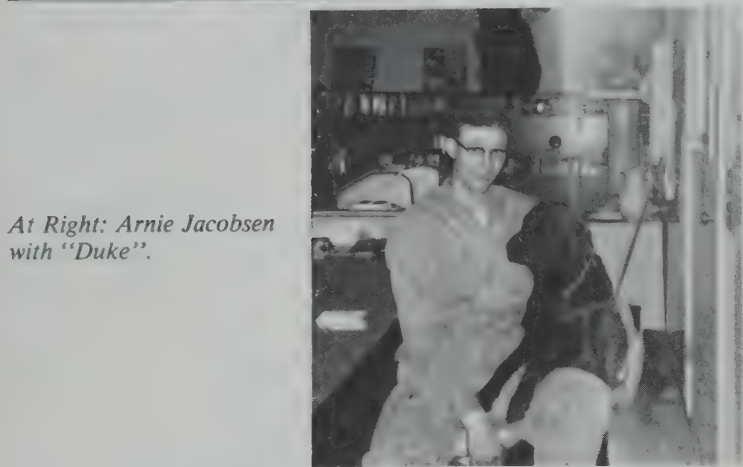
Back Row, Left to Right: Wayne Reynolds, John Podruzny, Bill Feniak, Joan Lebeuf, Olga Friesen, Joan Mick, Vi Wilde, Gloria Feniak. Front Row: Joe Lebeuf, Eva Shea, Olga Reynolds, George Shea and Grace Podruzny.



At Left: Sarah Jacobsen in front of "Jakes".



1945 - Left to Right: Lloyd Fowler, Bob Metz, Buddy Metz and Russell Laughy.



At Right: Arnie Jacobsen with "Duke".



At Right, Back Row, Left to Right: Ken Botham holding Naida, Bill Sallis Sr. Front Row: Gary and Ted Sallis.



At Left: The Elmer Sather Children. Top to Bottom: Faye, Dale, Wayne and Chris.



Margaret and Barry Murphy.

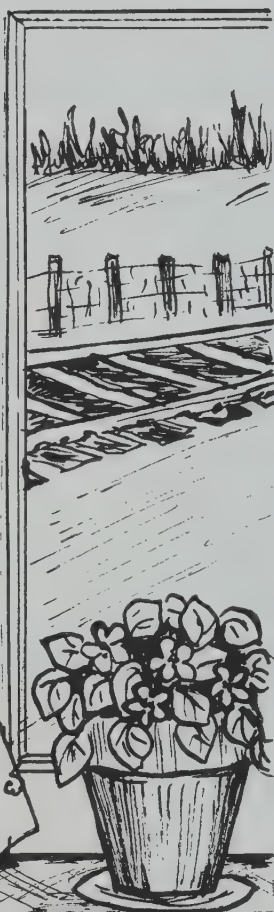
Coming Home

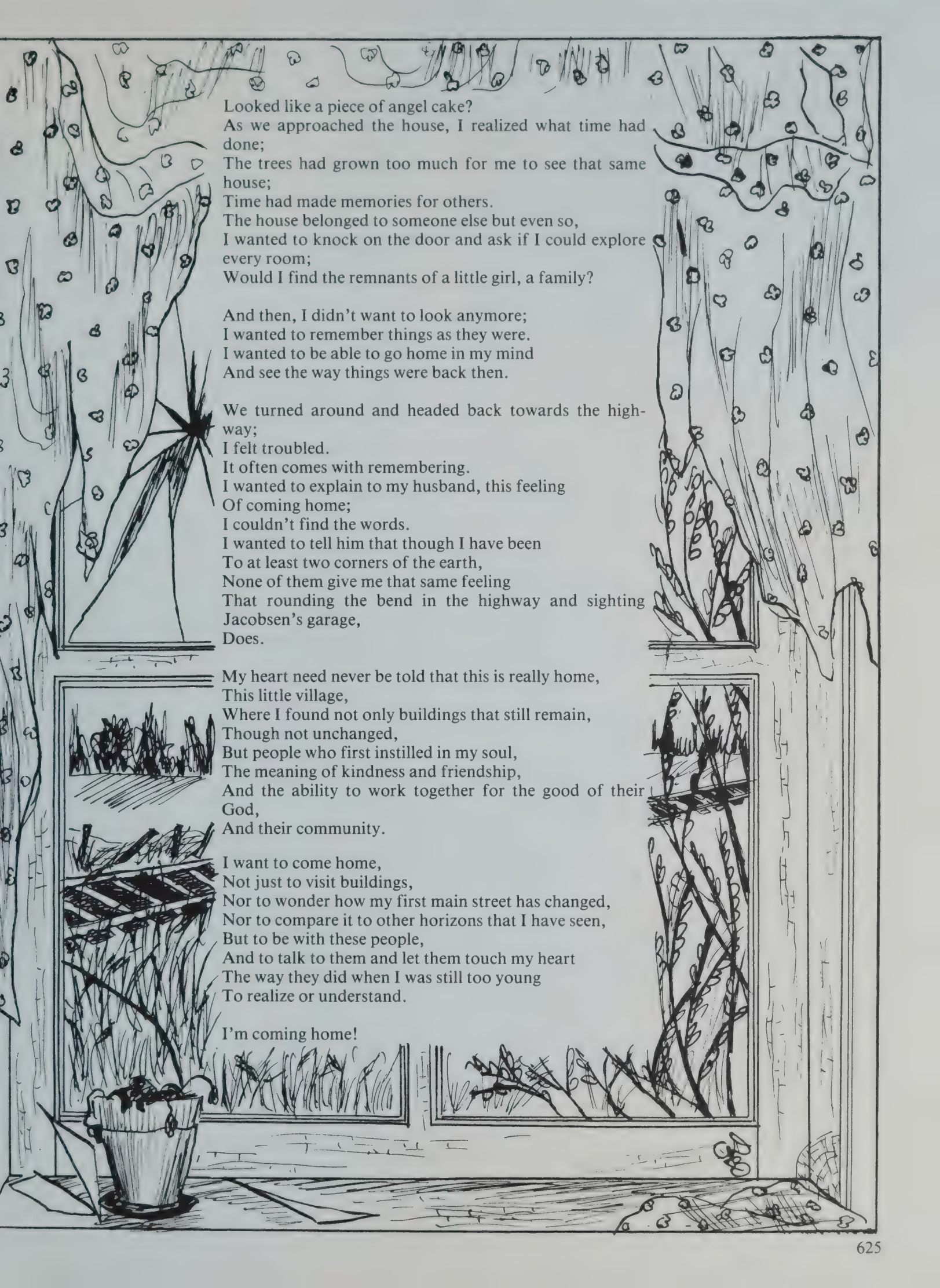
Patricia (Boisvert) Drapeau
March 1978

I was repotting a violet the other day
My bare fingers pushing the cool, wet soil,
Molding it firmly around the delicate roots.
I was thinking that I would have to establish a solid base
So this bit of greenery would flourish.

It made me think of the homecoming,
Of Wanham,
The little hamlet where I too had found my rooting.
It was there that my parents had introduced me
To the first place I called home,
And to my fellow man.

I have been away now,
Eighteen years,
But I drove my husband down mainstreet once,
Pointing out for him
What had been Zmean's grey brick garage and home;
I remembered the tall swing in the back;
Leriger's farm, where we, as children, had ridden horses
And found good times;
Fimrites general store where people bought,
But also found the time to stop and talk
(How much we lose in city stores);
Prevost's telephone office, always so intriguing
With all those buttons and snakes, now a relic from the
past;
The town hotel (I couldn't remember ever having been
inside),
And as though reliving a dream,
We drove on down towards the railroad tracks,
Past the Catholic church,
Once a formidable structure to my childhood eye,
But now quaint and tiny in comparison to Notre Dame or
St. Peter's,
And yet I wonder if those two monuments
Had ever seen the enthusiastic Christmas pageants
Or Easter Sundays that people of this parish
Had worked so hard to make.
We drove on towards the railroad tracks;
I had been a high wire ballerina on those blades of steel;
And I had seen an accident that killed a man.
A red building on this side had been my home;
Did it still have the beaten path along one side,
The one I had ridden my tricycle on?
Did it still have the little porch were Annie, our cat,
Had amazed us with the miracle of birth?
Was that willow tree that my brother had almost chopped
down
With my sister still in it, still standing?
Did this yard still have a yard big enough
That you could lie on your back and if you imagined hard
enough,
You could pretend you were alone on a prairie field
And look up at the sky and wonder why that cloud





Looked like a piece of angel cake?
As we approached the house, I realized what time had
done;
The trees had grown too much for me to see that same
house;
Time had made memories for others.
The house belonged to someone else but even so,
I wanted to knock on the door and ask if I could explore
every room;
Would I find the remnants of a little girl, a family?

And then, I didn't want to look anymore;
I wanted to remember things as they were.
I wanted to be able to go home in my mind
And see the way things were back then.

We turned around and headed back towards the high-
way;
I felt troubled.
It often comes with remembering.
I wanted to explain to my husband, this feeling
Of coming home;
I couldn't find the words.
I wanted to tell him that though I have been
To at least two corners of the earth,
None of them give me that same feeling
That rounding the bend in the highway and sighting
Jacobsen's garage,
Does.

My heart need never be told that this is really home,
This little village,
Where I found not only buildings that still remain,
Though not unchanged,
But people who first instilled in my soul,
The meaning of kindness and friendship,
And the ability to work together for the good of their
God,
And their community.

I want to come home,
Not just to visit buildings,
Nor to wonder how my first main street has changed,
Nor to compare it to other horizons that I have seen,
But to be with these people,
And to talk to them and let them touch my heart
The way they did when I was still too young
To realize or understand.

I'm coming home!

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